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VOL. 4092.

THE MAN OF PROPERTY.

BY
JOHN GALSWORTHY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II

*This volume has been reprinted in 1920
The usual quality of paper will again be used as soon as possible*

THE
MAN OF PROPERTY

JOHN GALSWORTHY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL II

LEIPZIG
BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1909

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THE MAN OF PROPERTY.

PART II.

(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER VI.

OLD JOLYON AT THE ZOO.

OLD JOLYON disposed of his second Meeting—an ordinary Board—summarily. He was so dictatorial that his fellow Directors were left in cabal over the increasing domineeringness of old Foisyte, which they were far from intending to stand much longer, they said.

He went out by Underground to Portland Road Station, whence he took a cab and drove to the Zoo.

He had an assignation there, one of those assignations that had lately been growing more frequent, to which his increasing uneasiness about June and the

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"change in her," as he expressed it, was driving him.

She buried herself away, and was growing thin; if he spoke to her he got no answer, or had his head snapped off, or she looked as if she would burst into tears. She was as changed as she could be, all through this Bosinney. As for telling him about anything, not a bit of it!

And he would sit for long spells brooding, his paper unread before him, a cigar extinct between his lips. She had been such a companion to him ever since she was three years old! And he loved her so!

Forces regardless of family or class or custom were beating down his guard; impending events over which he had no control threw their shadows on his head. The irritation of one accustomed to have his way was roused against he knew not what.

Chafing at the slowness of his cab, he reached the Zoo door; but, with his sunny instinct for seizing the good of each moment, he forgot his vexation as he walked towards the tryst.

From the stone terrace above the bear-pit his son and his two grandchildren came hastening down where

OLD JOLYON AT THE ZOO.

they saw old Jolyon coming, and led him away towards the lion-house. They supported him on either side, holding one to each of his hands, whilst Jolly, perverse like his father, carried his grandfather's umbrella in such a way as to catch people's legs with the crutch of the handle.

Young Jolyon followed.

It was as good as a play to see his father with the children, but such a play as brings smiles with tears behind. An old man and two small children walking together can be seen at any hour of the day; but the sight of old Jolyon, with Jolly and Holly, seemed to young Jolyon a special peep-show of the things that lie at the bottom of our hearts. The complete surrender of that erect old figure to those little figures on either hand was too poignantly tender, and, being a man of an habitual reflex action, young Jolyon swore softly under his breath. The show affected him in a way unbecoming to a Forsyte, who is nothing if not undemonstrative.

Thus they reached the lion-house.

There had been a morning *fête* at the Botanical Gardens, and a large number of Forsytes—that is, of well-

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dressed people who kept carriages—had brought them on to the Zoo, so as to have more, if possible, for their money, before going back to Rutland Gate, or Bryanston Square

"Let's go to the Zoo," they had said to each other, "it'll be great fun!" It was a shilling day, and there would not be all those horrid common people.

In front of the long line of cages they were collected in rows, watching the tawny, ravenous beasts behind the bars await their only pleasure of the four-and-twenty hours. The hungrier the beast, the greater the fascination. But whether because the spectators envied his appetite, or, more humanely, because it was so soon to be satisfied, young Jolyon could not tell. Remarks kept falling on his ears. "That's a nasty-looking brute, that tiger!" "Oh, what a love! Look at his little mouth!" "Yes, he's rather nice! Don't go too near, mother."

And frequently, with little pats, one or another would clap their hands to their pockets behind and look round, as though expecting young Jolyon or some disinterested-looking person to relieve them of the contents

A well-fed man in a white waistcoat said slowly

through his teeth: "It's all greed; they can't be hungry. Why, they take no exercise." At these words a tiger snatched a piece of bleeding liver, and the fat man laughed. His wife, in a Paris-model frock and gold nose-dippers, reproved him: "How can you laugh, Harry? Such a horrid sight!"

Young Jolyon frowned

The circumstances of his life, though he had ceased to take a too personal view of them, had left him subject to an intermittent contempt; and the class to which he had belonged,—the carriage class—especially excited his sarcasm.

To shut up a lion or tiger in confinement was surely a horrible barbarity. But no cultivated person would admit this.

The idea of its being barbarous to confine wild animals had probably never even occurred to his father for instance; he belonged to the old school, who considered it at once humanising and educational to confine baboons and panthers, holding the view, no doubt, that in course of time they might induce these creatures not so unreasonably to die of misery and heart-sickness against the bars of their cages, and put the society to

the expense of getting others! In his eyes, as in the eyes of all Forsytes, the pleasure of seeing these beautiful creatures in a state of captivity far outweighed the inconvenience of imprisonment to beasts whom God had so improvidently placed in a state of freedom! It was for the animals' good, removing them at once from the countless dangers of open air and exercise, and enabling them to exercise their functions in the guaranteed seclusion of a private compartment! Indeed, it was doubtful what wild animals were made for but to be shut up in cages!

But as young Jolyon had in his constitution the elements of impartiality, he reflected that to stigmatise as barbarity that which was merely lack of imagination must be wrong; for none who held these views had been placed in a similar position to the animals they caged, and could not, therefore, be expected to enter into their sensations

It was not until they were leaving the gardens—Jolly and Holly in a state of blissful delirium—that old Jolyon found an opportunity of speaking to his son on the matter next his heart. "I don't know what to make of it," he said, "if she's to go on as she's going

on now, I can't tell what's to come. I wanted her to see the doctor, but she won't. She's not a bit like me. She's your mother all over. Obstinate as a mule! If she doesn't want to do a thing, she won't, and there's an end of it!"

Young Jolyon smiled, his eyes had wandered to his father's chin. "A pain of you," he thought, but he said nothing.

"And then," went on old Jolyon "there's this Bosinney. I should like to punch the fellow's head, but I can't, I suppose, though—I don't see why you shouldn't," he added doubtfully.

"What has he done? Far better that it should come to an end, if they don't hit it off!"

Old Jolyon looked at his son. Now they had actually come to discuss a subject connected with the relations between the sexes he felt distrustful. Jo would be sure to hold some loose view or other.

"Well, I don't know what *you* think," he said; "I daresay your sympathy's with him—shouldn't be surprised, but *I* think he's behaving precious badly, and if he comes my way I shall tell him so." He dropped the subject.

It was impossible to discuss with his son the true nature and meaning of Bosmney's defection. Had not his son done the very same thing (worse, if possible) fifteen years ago? There seemed no end to the consequences of that piece of folly!

Young Jolyon was also silent, he had quickly penetrated his father's thought, for, dethroned from the high seat of an obvious and uncomplicated view of things, he had become both perceptive and subtle.

The attitude he had adopted towards sexual matters fifteen years before, however, was too different from his father's. There was no bridging the gulf

He said coolly "I suppose he's fallen in love with some other woman?"

Old Jolyon gave him a dubious look. "I can't tell," he said; "they say so!"

"Then, it's probably true," remarked young Jolyon unexpectedly, "and I suppose *they've* told you who she is?"

"Yes," said old Jolyon—"Soames's wife!"

Young Jolyon did not whistle. The circumstances of his own life had rendered him incapable of whistling

on such a subject, but he looked at his father, while the ghost of a smile hovered over his face

If old Jolyon saw, he took no notice.

"She and June were bosom-friends!" he muttered.

"Poor little June!" said young Jolyon softly. He thought of his daughter still as a babe of three.

Old Jolyon came to a sudden halt.

"I don't believe a word of it," he said, "it's some old woman's tale. Get me a cab, Jo, I'm tired to death!"

They stood at a corner to see if an empty cab would come along, while carriage after carriage drove past, bearing Forsytes of all descriptions from the Zoo. The harness, the liveries, the gloss on the horses' coats, shone and glittered in the May sunlight, and each equipage, landau, sociable, barouche, Victoria, or brougham, seemed to roll out proudly from its wheels:

"I and my horses and my men you know,
Indeed the whole turn-out have cost a pot
But we were worth it every penny. Look
At Master and at Missis now, the dawgs!
Ease with security—ah! that's the ticket!"

And such, as everyone knows, is fit accompaniment for a perambulating Forsyte.

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Amongst these carriages was a barouche coming at a greater pace than the others, drawn by a pair of bright bay horses. It swung on its high springs, and the four people who filled it seemed rocked as in a cradle.

This chariot attracted young Jolyon's attention, and suddenly, on the back-seat, he recognised his Uncle James, unmistakable in spite of the increased whiteness of his whiskers; opposite, their backs defended by sunshades, Rachel Forsyte and her younger but married sister, Winifred Dartie, in irreproachable *toilettes*, had posed their heads haughtily, like two of the birds they had been seeing at the Zoo, while by James's side reclined Dartie, in a brand-new flock-coat buttoned tight and square, with a large expanse of carefully shot linen protruding below each wristband.

An extra, if subdued, sparkle, an added touch of the best gloss or varnish characterised this vehicle, and seemed to distinguish it from all the others, as though by some happy extravagance—like that which marks out the real "work of art" from the ordinary "picture"—it were designated as the typical car, the very throne of Forsytedom.

Old Jolyon did not see them pass; he was petting poor Holly who was tired, but those in the carriage had taken in the little group; the ladies' heads tilted suddenly, there was a spasmodic screening movement of parasols; James's face protruded naively, like the head of a long bird, his mouth slowly opening. The shield-like rounds of the parasols grew smaller and smaller, and vanished.

Young Jolyon saw that he had been recognised, even by Winifred, who could not have been more than fifteen when he had forfeited the right to be considered a Forsyte.

There was not much change in *them*! He remembered the exact look of their turn-out all that time ago: Horses, men, carriage—all different now, no doubt—but of the precise stamp of fifteen years before, the same neat display, the same nicely calculated arrogance—ease with security! The swing exact, the pose of the sunshades exact, exact the spirit of the whole thing.

And in the sunlight, defended by the haughty shields of parasols, carriage after carriage went by.

"Uncle James has just passed, with his female folk," said young Jolyon.

His father looked black. "Did your uncle see us? Yes? Humph! What's *he* want, coming down into these parts?"

An empty cab drove up at this moment, and old Jolyon stopped it.

"I shall see you again before long, my boy!" he said. "Don't you go paying any attention to what I've been saying about young Bosinney I don't believe a word of it!"

Kissing the children, who tried to detain him, he stepped in and was borne away

Young Jolyon, who had taken Holly up in his arms, stood motionless at the corner, looking after the cab

CHAPTER VII
AFTERNOON AT TIMOTHY'S

If old Jolyon, as he got into his cab, had said: "*I don't believe a word of it!*" he would more truthfully have expressed his sentiments.

The notion that James and his womankind had seen him in the company of his son had awakened in him not only the impatience he always felt when crossed, but that secret hostility natural between brothers, the roots of which - little nursery rivalries - sometimes toughen and deepen as life goes on, and, all hidden, support a plant capable of producing in season the bitterest fruits.

Hitherto there had been between these six brothers no more unfriendly feeling than that caused by the secret and natural doubt that the others might be richer than themselves, a feeling increased to the pitch of curiosity by the approach of death—that end of all

handicaps—and the great “closeness” of their man of business, who, with some sagacity, would profess to Nicholas ignorance of James’s income, to James ignorance of old Jolyon’s, to Jolyon ignorance of Roger’s, to Roger ignorance of Swithin’s, while to Swithin he would say most irritatingly that Nicholas must be a rich man. Timothy alone was exempt, being in gilt-edged securities.

But now, between two of them at least, had arisen a very different sense of injury. From the moment when James had the impertinence to pry into his affairs—as he put it—old Jolyon no longer chose to credit this story about Bosinney. His granddaughter slighted through a member of “that fellow’s” family! He made up his mind that Bosinney was maligned. There must be some other reason for his defection.

June had flown out at him, or something, she was as touchy as she could be!

He would, however, let Timothy have a bit of his mind, and see if he would go on dropping hints! And he would not let the grass grow under his feet either, he would go there at once, and take very good care that he didn’t have to go again on the same errand.

THE SCENE AT TIMOTHY'S.

He saw James's carriage blocking the pavement in front of "The Bower." So they had got there before him—cackling about having seen him, he dared say! And further on, Swithin's greys were turning their noses towards the noses of James's bays, as though in conclave over the family, while their coachmen were in conclave above.

Old Jolyon, depositing his hat on the chair in the narrow hall, where that hat of Bosinney's had so long ago been mistaken for a cat, passed his thin hand lightly over his face with its great drooping white moustaches, as though to remove all traces of expression, and made his way upstairs.

He found the front drawing-room full. It was full enough at the best of times—without visitors—without anyone in it—for Timothy and his sisters, following the tradition of their generation, considered that a room was not quite "nice" unless it was "properly" furnished. It held, therefore, eleven chairs, a sofa, three tables, two cabinets, innumerable knickknacks, and part of a large grand piano. And now, occupied by Mrs. Small, Aunt Hester, by Swithin, James, Rachel, Winifred, Euphemia, who had come in again to return "Passion and Pare-

goric" which she had read at lunch, and her' chum Frances, Roger's daughter (the musical Forsyte, the one who composed songs), there was only one chair left unoccupied, except, of course, the two that nobody ever sat on-- and the only standing room was occupied by the cat, on whom old Jolyon promptly stepped

In these days it was by no means unusual for Timothy to have so many visitors. The family had always, one and all, had a real respect for Aunt Ann, and now that she was gone, they were coming far more frequently to The Bower, and staying longer.

Swithin had been the first to arrive, and seated torpid in a red satin chair with a gilt back, he gave every appearance of lasting the others out. And symbolising Bosinney's name "the big one," with his great stature and bulk, his thick white hair, his puffy immovable shaven face, he looked more primeval than ever in the highly upholstered room.

His conversation, as usual of late, had turned at once upon Irene, and he had lost no time in giving Aunts Juley and Hester his opinion with regard to this rumour he heard was going about. No—as he said—she might want a bit of flirtation—a pretty woman must

have her fling, but more than that he did not believe. Nothing open; she had too much good sense, too much proper appreciation of what was due to her position, and to the family! No so -- he was going to say "scandal" but the very idea was so preposterous that he waved his hand as though to say -- "but let that pass!"

Granted that Swithun took a bachelor's view of the situation-- still what indeed was not due to that family in which so many had done so well for themselves, had attained a certain position? If he *had* heard in dark, pessimistic moments the words "yeomen" and "very small beer" used in connection with his origin, did he believe them?

No! he cherished, hugging it pathetically to his bosom, the secret theory that there was something distinguished somewhere in his ancestry.

"Must be," he once said to young Jolyon, before the latter went to the bad "Look at us, *we've* got on! There must be good blood in us somewhere."

He had been fond of young Jolyon. the boy had been in a good set at College, had known that old ruffian Sir Charles Fiste's sons—a pretty rascal one of

them had turned out, too; and there was style about him—it was a thousand pities he had run off with that foreign girl—a governess too! If he must go off like that why couldn't he have chosen someone who would have done them credit! And what was he now?—an underwriter at Lloyd's; they said he even painted pictures—pictures! Dammel! he might have ended as Sir Jolyon Forsyte, Bart., with a seat in Parliament, and a place in the country!

It was Swithin who, following the impulse which sooner or later urges thereto some member of every great family, went to the Heralds' Office, where they assured him that he was undoubtedly of the same family as the well-known Forsytes with an "i," whose arms were "three dexter buckles on a sable ground gules," hoping no doubt to get him to take them up.

Swithin, however, did not do this, but having ascertained that the crest was a "pheasant proper," and the motto "For Forsite," he had the pheasant proper placed upon his carriage and the buttons of his coachman, and both crest and motto on his writing-paper. The arms he hugged to himself, partly because, not having paid for them, he thought it would look ostentatious to

AFTERNOON AT TIMOTHY'S.

put them on his carriage, and he hated ostentation, and partly because he, like any practical man all over the country, had a secret dislike and contempt for things he could not understand—he found it hard, as anyone might, to swallow “three dexter buckles on a sable ground gules.”

He never forgot, however, their having told him that if he paid for them he would be entitled to use them, and it strengthened his conviction that he was a gentleman. Imperceptibly the rest of the family absorbed the “pheasant proper,” and some, more serious than others, adopted the motto; old Jolyon, however, refused to use the latter, saying that it was humbug—meaning nothing, so far as he could see.

Among the older generation it was perhaps known at bottom from what great historical event they derived their crest; and if pressed on the subject, sooner than tell a lie—they did not like telling lies, having an impression that only Frenchmen and Russians told them—they would confess hurriedly that Swithin had got hold of it somehow.

Among the younger generation the matter was wrapped in a discretion proper. They did not want

to hurt the feelings of their elders, nor to feel ridiculous themselves; they simply used the crest. . . .

"No," said Swithin, "he had had an opportunity of seeing for himself, and what he should say was, that there was nothing in her manner to that young Buccaneer or Bosinney or whatever his name was, different from her manner to himself, in fact, he should rather say . . ." But here the entrance of Frances and Euphemia put an unfortunate stop to the conversation, for this was not a subject which could be discussed before young people.

And though Swithin was somewhat upset at being stopped like this on the point of saying something important, he soon recovered his affability. He was rather fond of Frances—Francie, as she was called in the family. She was so smart, and they told him she made a pretty little pot of pun-money by her songs, he called it very clever of her.

He rather prided himself indeed on a liberal attitude towards women, not seeing any reason why they shouldn't paint pictures, or write tunes, or books even, for the matter of that, especially if they could turn a

useful penny by it; not at all—kept them out of mischief. It was not as if they were men!

"Little Francie," as she was usually called with good natured contempt, was an important personage, if only as a standing illustration of the attitude of Forsytes towards the Arts. She was not really "little," but rather tall, with dark hair for a Forsyte, which, together with a grey eye, gave her what was called "a Celtic appearance." She wrote songs with titles like "Breathing Sighs," or "Kiss me, Mother, ere I die," with a refrain like an anthem

"Kiss me, Mother, ere I die,
Kiss me—kiss me, Mother, ah!
Kiss, ah! kiss me ere I—
Kiss me, Mother, ere I d—d—die!"

She wrote the words to them herself, and other poems. In lighter moments she wrote waltzes, one of which, the "Kensington Coil," was almost national to Kensington, having a sweet dip in it. Thus,



It was very original. Then there were her "Songs for

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Little People," at once educational and witty, especially "Gran'ma's Porgie," and that ditty, almost prophetically imbued with the coming Imperial spirit, entitled "Black him in his little eye."

Any publisher would take these, and reviews like "High Living," and the "Ladies Genteel Guide" went into raptures over: "Another of Miss Francie Forsyte's spirited ditties, sparkling and pathetic. We ourselves were moved to tears and laughter. Miss Forsyte should go far."

With the true instinct of her breed, Francie had made a point of knowing the right people—people who would write about her, and talk about her, and people in Society, too—keeping a mental register of just where to exert her fascinations, and an eye on that steady scale of rising prices, which in her mind's eye represented the future. In this way she caused herself to be universally respected.

Once, at a time when her emotions were whipped by an attachment—for the tenor of Roger's life, with its whole-hearted collection of house property, had induced in his eldest daughter a tendency towards passion—she turned to great and sincere work, choosing the

sonata form, for the violin. This was the only one of her productions that troubled the Forsytes. They felt at once that it would not sell.

Roger, who liked having a clever daughter well enough, and often alluded to the amount of pocket-money she made for herself, was upset by this violin sonata.

"Rubbish like that!" he called it. Francie had borrowed young Flageoletti from Euphemia, to play it in the drawing-room at Prince's Gardens.

As a matter of fact Roger was right. It *was* rubbish, but—annoying! the sort of rubbish that wouldn't sell. As every Forsyte knows, rubbish that sells is not rubbish at all—far from it.

And yet, in spite of the sound commonsense that fixed the worth of art at what it would fetch, some of the Forsytes—Aunt Hester, for instance, who had always been musical—could not help regretting that Francie's music was not "classical;" the same with her poems. But then, as Aunt Hester said, they didn't see any poetry nowadays, all the poems were "little light things." There was nobody who could write a poem like "Paradise Lost," or "Childe Harold;" either of which made

you feel that you really had read something. Still, it was nice for Francie to have something to occupy her, while other girls were spending money shopping she was making it! And both Aunt Hester and Aunt Juley were always ready to listen to the latest story of how Francie had got her price increased

They listened now, together with Swithin, who sat pretending not to, for these young people talked so fast and mumbled so, he never could catch what they said!

"And I can't think," said Mrs. Septimus, "how you do it. I should never have the audacity!"

Francie smiled lightly. "I'd much rather deal with a man than a woman. Women are so sharp!"

"My dear," cried Mrs. Small, "I'm sure we're not."

Euphemia went off into her silent laugh, and, ending with the squeak, said, as though being strangled "Oh, you'll kill me some day, auntie."

Swithin saw no necessity to laugh, he detested people laughing when he himself perceived no joke. Indeed, he detested Euphemia altogether, to whom he always alluded as "Nick's daughter, what's she called -- the pale one?" He had just missed being her god

father—indeed, would have been, had he not taken a firm stand against her outlandish name. He hated becoming a godfather. Swithin then said to Francie with dignity, “It’s a fine day—er—for the time of year.” But Euphemia, who knew perfectly well that he had refused to be her godfather, turned to Aunt Hester, and began telling her how she had seen Irene—Mrs Soames—at the Church and Commercial Stores.

“And Soames was with her?” said Aunt Hester, to whom Mrs Small had as yet had no opportunity of relating the incident.

“*Soames* with her? Of course not!”

“But was she all alone in London?”

“Oh, no, there was Mr Bonney with her. She was *perfectly* dressed.”

But Swithin, hearing the name Irene, looked severely at Euphemia, who, it is true, never did look well in a dress, whatever she may have done on other occasions, and said

“Dressed like a lady, I’ve no doubt. It’s a pleasure to see her.”

At this moment James and his daughters were announced. Dartie, feeling badly in want of a drink, had

pleaded an appointment with his dentist, and, being put down at the Marble Arch, had got into a hansom, and was already seated in the window of his club in Piccadilly.

His wife, he told his cronies, had wanted to take him to pay some calls. It was not in his line—not exactly. Haw!

Hailing the waiter, he sent him out to the hall to see what had won the 4.30 race. He was dog-tired, he said, and that was a fact; had been drivm' about with his wife to "shows" all the afternoon. Had put his foot down at last. A fellow must live his own life.

At this moment, glancing out of the bay window—for he loved this seat whence he could see everybody pass—his eye unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, chanced to light on the figure of Soames, who was mousing across the road from the Green Park side, with the evident intention of coming in, for he, too, belonged to "The Iseeum."

Dartie sprang to his feet; grasping his glass, he muttered something about "that 4.30 race," and swiftly withdrew to the card-room, where Soames never came. Here, in complete isolation and a dim light, he lived

his own life till half-past seven, by which hour he knew Soames must certainly have left the club.

It would not do, as he kept repeating to himself whenever he felt the impulse to join the gossip in the bay-window getting too strong for him—it absolutely would not do, with finances as low as his, and the “old man” (James) rusty ever since that business over the oil shares, which was no fault of his, to risk a row with Winifred.

If Soames were to see him in the club it would be sure to come round to her that he wasn't at the dentist's at all. He never knew a family where things “came round” so. Uneasily, amongst the green baize card-tables, a frown on his olive-coloured face, his check trousers crossed, and patent-leather boots shining through the gloom, he sat biting his forefinger, and wondering where the deuce he was to get the money if Erotic failed to win the Lancashire Cup.

His thoughts turned gloomily to the Forsytes. What set they were! There was no getting anything out of them—at least, it was a matter of extreme difficulty. They were so d——d particular about money matters; not a sportsman amongst the lot, unless it were George.

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That fellow Soames, for instance, would have a fit if you tried to borrow a tanner from him, or, if he didn't have a fit, he looked at you with his cursed supercilious smile, as if you were a lost soul because you were in want of money.

And that wife of his (Dartie's mouth watered involuntarily), he had tried to be on good terms with her, as one naturally would with any pretty sister-in-law, but he would be cursed if the--(he mentally used a coarse word)—would have anything to say to him, she looked at him, indeed, as if he were dirt and yet he could go far enough, he wouldn't mind being it. He knew women; they weren't made with soft faces and figures like that for nothing, as that fellow Soames would jolly soon find out, if there were anything in what he had heard about this Buccaneer Johnny.

Rising from his chair, Dartie took a turn across the room, ending in front of the looking-glass, over the marble chimney-piece, and there he stood for a long time contemplating in the glass the reflection of his face. It had that look, peculiar to some men, of having been steeped in linseed oil, with its waxed dark moustaches and the little distinguished commencements of side

whiskers; and concernedly he felt the promise of a pimple on the side of his slightly curved and fattish nose.

In the meantime old Jolyon had found the remaining chair in Timothy's commodious drawing room. His advent had obviously put a stop to the conversation, decided awkwardness having set in. Aunt Juley, with her well known kind-heartedness, hastened to set people at their ease again.

"Yes, Jolyon," she said, "we were just saying that you haven't been here for a long time, but we mustn't be surprised. You're busy, of course? James was just saying what a busy time of year——"

"Was he?" said old Jolyon, looking hard at James. "It wouldn't be half so busy if everybody minded their own business."

James, brooding in a small chair from which his knees ran uphill, shifted his feet uneasily, and put one of them down on the cat, which had unwisely taken refuge from old Jolyon beside him.

"Here, you've got a cat here," he said in an injured voice, withdrawing his foot nervously as he felt it squeezing into the soft, furry body.

"Several," said old Jolyon, looking at one face and another; "I trod on one just now."

A silence followed.

Then Mrs. Small, twisting her fingers and gazing round with pathetic calm, asked: "And how is dear June?"

A twinkle of humour shot through the sternness of old Jolyon's eyes. Extraordinary old woman, Juley! No one quite like her for saying the wrong thing!

"Bad!" he said; "London don't agree with her—too many people about, too much clatter and chatter by half." He laid emphasis on the words, and again looked James in the face.

Nobody spoke.

A feeling of its being too dangerous to take a step in any direction, or hazard any remark, had fallen on them all. Something of the sense of the impending, that comes over the spectator of a Greek tragedy, had entered that upholstered room, filled with those white-haired, frock-coated old men, and fashionably attired women, who were all of the same blood, between all of whom existed an unseizable resemblance.

Not that they were conscious of it—the visits of such fastid, bitter spirits are only felt.

Then Swithin rose. He would not sit there, looking like that—he was not to be put down by anyone! And manœuvring round the room with added pomp, he shook hands with each separately.

“You tell Timothy from me,” he said, “that he coddles himself too much!” Then, turning to Francie whom he considered “smart,” he added: “You come with me for a drive one of these days.” But this conjured up the vision of that other eventful drive which had been so much talked about, and he stood quite still for a second, with glassy eyes, as though waiting to catch up with the significance of what he himself had said; then, suddenly recollecting that he didn’t care a damn, he turned to old Jolyon: “Well, good-bye, Jolyon! You shouldn’t go about without an overcoat, you’ll be getting sciatica or something!” And, kicking the cat slightly with the pointed tip of his patent-leather boot, he took his huge form away.

When he had gone everyone looked secretly at the others, to see how they had taken the mention of the word “drive”—the word which had become famous

and acquired an overwhelming importance, as the only official—so to speak—news in connection with the vague and sinister rumour clinging to the family tongue

Euphemia, yielding to an impulse, said with a short laugh: "I'm glad Uncle Swithin doesn't ask me to go for drives."

Mrs. Small, to reassure her and smoothe over any little awkwardness the subject might have, replied, "My dear, he likes to take somebody well dressed, who will do him a little credit. I shall never forget the drive he took me. It was an experience!" And her chubby round old face was spread for a moment with a strange contentment; then broke into pouts, and tears came into her eyes. She was thinking of that long ago driving tour she had once taken with Septimus Small.

James, who had relapsed into his nervous brooding in the little chair, suddenly roused himself: "He's a funny fellow, Swithin," he said, but in a half-hearted way.

Old Jolyon's silence, his stern eyes, held them all in a kind of paralysis. He was disconcerted himself by the effect of his own words—an effect which seemed to

deepen the importance of the very rumour he had come to scotch; but he was still angry.

He had not done with them yet—No, no—he would give them another rub or two!

He did not wish to rub his nieces, he had no quarrel with them—a young and presentable female always appealed to old Jolyon's clemency—but that fellow James, and, in a less degree perhaps, those others, deserved all they would get. And he, too, asked for Timothy

As though feeling that some danger threatened her younger brother, Aunt Juley suddenly offered him tea: "There it is," she said, "all cold and nasty, waiting for you in the back drawing-room, but Smither shall make you some fresh."

Old Jolyon rose: "Thank you," he said, looking straight at James, "but I've no time for tea, and—scandal, and the rest of it! It's time I was at home. Good-bye, Julia; good-bye, Hester; good-bye, Winifred."

Without more ceremonious adieux, he marched out.

Once again in his cab, his anger evaporated, for so it ever was with his wrath—when he had rapped out, it was gone. Sadness came over his spirit. He had

stopped their mouths, maybe, but at what a cost! At the cost of certain knowledge that the rumour he had been resolved not to believe was true. June was abandoned, and for the wife of that fellow's son! He felt it was true, and hardened himself to treat it as if it were not; but the pain he hid beneath this resolution began slowly, surely, to vent itself in a blind resentment against James and his son.

The six women and one man left behind in the little drawing-room began talking as easily as might be after such an occurrence, for though each one of them knew for a fact that he or she never talked scandal, each one of them also knew that the other six did; all were therefore angry and at a loss. James only was silent, disturbed to the bottom of his soul.

Presently Francie said: "Do you know, I think Uncle Jolyon is terribly changed this last year. What do *you* think, Aunt Hester?"

Aunt Hester made a little movement of recoil: "Oh, ask your Aunt Julia!" she said; "I know nothing about it."

No one else was afraid of assenting, and James

sat there gloomily at the foot: "He's not half the man he was."

"I've noticed it a long time," went on Francie; "He's aged tremendously."

Aunt Juley shook her head; her face seemed suddenly to have become one immense pout.

"Poor dear Joffon," she said, "somebody ought to see to it for him!"

There was again silence; then, as though in terror of being left solitarily behind, all five visitors rose simultaneously, and took their departure.

Mrs. Small, Aunt Hester and their cat were left once more alone, the sound of a door closing in the distance announced the approach of Timothy.

That evening, when Aunt Hester had just got off to sleep in the back bedroom that used to be Aunt Juley's before Aunt Juley took Aunt Ann's, her door was opened, and Mrs. Small, in a pink night-cap, a candle in her hand, entered: "Hester!" she said. "Hester!"

Aunt Hester faintly rustled the sheet.

"Hester," repeated Aunt Juley, to make quite sure that she had awakened her, "I am quite troubled about

poor dear Jolyon. *What,*" Aunt Juley dwelt on the word, "do you think ought to be done?"

Aunt Hester again rustled the sheet, her voice was heard faintly pleading. "Done? How should I know?"

Aunt Juley turned away satisfied, and closing the door with extra gentleness so as not to disturb dear Hester, let it slip through her fingers and fall to with a "clack."

Back in her own room, she stood at the window gazing at the moon over the trees in the Park, through a chink in the muslin curtains, close drawn lest anyone should see. And there, with her face all round and pouting in its pink cap, and her eyes wet, she thought of "dear Jolyon," so old and so lonely, and how she could be of some use to him, and how he would come to love her, as she had never been loved since—since poor Septimus went away.

CHAPTER VIII.
DANCE AT ROGER'S

ROGER'S house in Prince's Gardens was brilliantly alight. Large numbers of wax candles had been collected and placed in cut glass chandeliers, and the parquet floor of the long, double drawing-room reflected these constellations. An appearance of real spaciousness had been secured by moving out all the furniture onto the upper landings, and enclosing the room with those strange appendages of civilisation known as "rout" seats.

In a remote corner, embowered in palms, was a cottage piano, with a copy of the "Kensington Coil" open on the music-stand.

Roger had objected to a band. He didn't see in the least what they wanted with a band; he wouldn't go to the expense, and there was an end of it. Francie (her mother, whom Roger had long since reduced to chronic dyspepsia, went to bed on such occasions), had

been obliged to content herself with supplementing the piano by a young man who played the cornet, and she so arranged with palms that anyone who did not look into the heart of things might imagine there were several musicians secreted there. She made up her mind to tell them to play loud—there was a lot of music in a cornet, if the man would only put his soul into it.

In the more cultivated American tongue, she was “through” at last—through that tortuous labyrinth of make-shifts, which must be traversed before fashionable display can be combined with the sound economy of a Forsyte. Thin but brilliant, in her maize-coloured frock with much tulle about the shoulders, she went from place to place, fitting on her gloves, and casting her eye over it all.

To the hired butler (for Roger only kept maids) she spoke about the wine. Did he quite understand that Mr. Forsyte wished a dozen bottles of the champagne from Whiteley’s to be put out? But if that were finished (she did not suppose it would be, most of the ladies would drink water, no doubt), but if it were, there was the champagne cup, and he must do the best he could with that.

She hated having to say this sort of thing to a butler, it was so *infra dig.*; but what could you do with father? Roger, indeed, after making himself consistently disagreeable about the dance, would come down presently, with his fresh colour and bumpy forehead, as though he had been its promoter; and he would smile, and probably take the prettiest woman in to supper, and at two o'clock, just as they were getting into the swing, he would go up secretly to the musicians and tell them to play "God save the Queen," and go away.

Francie devoutly hoped he might soon get tired, and slip off to bed.

The three or four devoted girl friends who were staying in the house for this dance, had partaken with her, in a small, abandoned room upstairs, of tea and cold chicken-legs, hurriedly served; the men had been sent out to dine at Eustace's Club, it being felt that they must be fed up.

Punctually on the stroke of nine arrived Mrs. Small alone. She made elaborate apologies for the absence of Timothy, omitting all mention of Aunt Hester, who, at the last minute, had said she could not be bothered. Francie received her effusively, and placed her on a

roust seat, where she left her, pouting and solitary in lavender-coloured satin—the first time she had worn colour since Aunt Ann's death.

The devoted maiden friends came now from their rooms, each by magic arrangement in a differently coloured frock, but all with the same liberal allowance of tulle on the shoulders and at the bosom---for they were, by some fatality, lean to a girl. They were all taken up to Mrs Small. None stayed with her more than a few seconds, but clustering together, talked and twisted their programmes, looking secretly at the door for the first appearance of a man.

Then arrived in a group a number of Nicholases, always punctual- the fashion up Ladbroke Grove way, and close behind them Eustace and his men, gloomy and smelling rather of smoke.

Three or four of Francie's lovers now appeared, one after the other, she had made each promise to come early. They were all clean-shaven and sprightly, with that peculiar kind of young-man sprightliness which had recently invaded Kensington; they did not seem to mind each other's presence in the least, and wore their ties bunching out at the ends, white waistcoats, and socks

with clocks. All had handkerchiefs concealed in their cuffs. They moved buoyantly, each armoured in professional gaiety, as though he had come to do great deeds. Their faces when they danced, far from wearing the traditional solemn look of the dancing Englishman, were irresponsible, charming, sauve, they bounded, twirling their partners at great pace, without pedantic attention to the rhythm of the music.

At other dancers they looked with a kind of angry scorn—they, the light brigade, the heroes of a hundred Kensington "hops"—from whom alone could the right manner and smile and step be hoped.

After this the stream came fast, chaperones sitting up along the wall facing the entrance, the volatile element swelling the eddy in the larger room.

Men were scarce, and wallflowers wore their peculiar, pathetic expression, a patient, sourish smile which seemed to say "Oh, no! don't mistake me, I know you are not coming up to me. I can hardly expect that!" And Francie would plead with one of her lovers, or with some callow youth. "Now, to please me, do let me introduce you to Miss Pink, such a nice girl, really!" and she would bring him up, and say "Miss Pink—

Mr. Gathercole. *Can you spare him a dance?* When Miss Pink, smiling her forced smile, colouring a little, answered: "Oh! I think so!" and scribbling her empty card, wrote on it the name of Gathercole, spelling it passionately in the district that he proposed, about the second extra.

But when the youth had murmured that it was hot, and passed, she relapsed into her attitude of hopeless expectation, into her patient, sourish smile.

Mothers, slowly fanning their faces, watched their daughters, and in their eyes could be read all the story of those daughters' fortunes. As for themselves, to sit hour after hour, dead tired, silent, or talking spasmodically—what did it matter, so long as the girls were having a good time! But to see them neglected and passed by! Ah! they smiled, but their eyes stabbed like the eyes of an offended swan; they longed to pluck young Gathercole by the slack of his dandified breeches, and drag him to their daughters—the jackanapes!

And all the cruelties and hardness of life, its pathos and unequal chances, its conceit, self-forgetfulness, and

...were presented on the battlefield of this
...ball-room.

Here and there, too, lovers—not lovers like Francie's, a peculiar breed, but simply lovers—trembling, blushing, silent, sought each other by flying glances, sought to meet and touch in the mazes of the dance, and now and again dancing together, struck some beholder by the light in their eyes.

Not a second before ten o'clock came the Janes's—Emily, Rachel, Winifred (Dartie had been left behind, having on a former occasion drunk too much champagne at Roger's), and Cicely the youngest, making her *début*; behind them, following in a hansom from the paternal mansion where they had dined, Soames and Jane

All these ladies had shoulder-straps and no tulle—thus showing at once, by a bolder exposure of flesh, that they came from the more fashionable side of the Park.

Soames, sidling back from the contact of the dancers, took up a position against the wall. Guarding himself with his pale smile, he stood watching. Waltz after waltz began and ended, couple after couple brushed by with smiling lips, laughter, and snatches of talk; or

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with set lips, and eyes searching the throng; on again, with silent parted lips, and eyes on each other. And the scent of festivity, the odour of flowers, and hair, of essences that women love, rose suffocatingly in the heat of the summer night.

Silent, with something of scorn in his smile, Soames seemed to notice nothing; but now and again his eyes, finding that which they sought, would fix themselves on a point in the shifting throng, and the smile die off his lips.

He danced with no one. Some fellows danced with their wives, his sense of "form" had never permitted him to dance with Irene since their marriage, and the God of the Forsytes alone can tell whether this was a relief to him or not.

She passed, dancing with other men, her dress, iris-coloured, floating away from her feet. She danced well, he was tired of hearing women say with an acid smile: "How beautifully your wife dances, Mr. Forsyte—it's quite a pleasure to watch her!" Tired of answering them with his sidelong glance "You think so?"

A young couple close by flirted a fan by turns,

making an unpleasant draught. Francie and one of her lovers stood near. They were talking of love

He heard Roger's voice behind, giving an order about supper to a servant. Everything was very second-class! He wished that he had not come! He had asked Irene whether she wanted him; she had answered with that maddening smile of hers "Oh, no!"

Why *had* he come? For the last quarter of an hour he had not even seen her. Here was George advancing with his Quilpish face, it was too late to get out of his way

"Have you seen 'The Buccaneer?'" said this licensed wag, "he's on the warpath—han cut and everything!"

Soames said he had not, and crossing the room, half-empty in an interval of the dance, he went out on the balcony, and looked down into the street.

A carriage had driven up with late arrivals, and round the door hung some of those patient watchers of the London streets who spring up to the call of light or music; their faces, pale and upturned above their black and rusty figures, had an air of stolid watching that annoyed Soames. Why were they allowed to hang about, why didn't the bobby move them on?

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But the policeman took no notice of them; his feet were planted apart on the strip of crimson carpet stretched across the pavement; his face, under the helmet, wore the same stolid, watching look as theirs.

Across the road, through the railings, Soames could see the branches of trees shining, faintly stirring in the breeze, by the gleam of the street lamps; beyond, again, the upper lights of the houses on the other side, so many eyes looking down on the quiet blackness of the garden; and over all, the sky, that wonderful London sky, dusted with the innumerable reflection of countless lamps; a dome woven over between its stars with the refraction of human needs and human fancies—immense mirror of pomp and misery that night after night stretches its kindly mocking over miles of houses and gardens, mansions and squalor, over Forsytes, policemen, and patient watchers in the streets.

Soames turned away, and, hidden in the recess, gazed into the lighted room. It was cooler out there. He saw the new arrivals, June and her grandfather, enter. What had made them so late? They stood by the doorway. They looked fagged. Fancy Uncle Jolyon turning out at this time of night! Why hadn't

June came to Irene, as she usually did, and it occurred to him suddenly that he had seen nothing of June for a long time now.

Watching her face with idle malice, he saw it change, grow so pale that he thought she would drop, then flame out crimson. Turning to see at what she was looking, he saw his wife on Bosinney's arm, coming from the conservatory at the end of the room. Her eyes were raised to his, as though answering some question he had asked, and he was gazing at her intently.

Soames looked again at June. Her hand rested on old Jolyon's arm; she seemed to be making a request. He saw a surprised look on his uncle's face, they turned and passed through the door out of his sight.

The music began again—a waltz—and, still as a statue in the recess of the window, his face unmoved, but no smile on his lips, Soames waited. Presently, within a yard of the dark balcony, his wife and Bosinney passed. He caught the perfume of the gardenias that she wore, saw the rise and fall of her bosom, the languor in her eyes, her parted lips, and a look on her face that he did not know. To the slow, swinging

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measure they danced by, and it seemed to him that they clung to each other; he saw her raise her eyes, soft and dark, to Bosinney's, and drop them again.

Very white, he turned back to the balcony, and leaning on it, gazed down on the Square; the figures were still there looking up at the light with dull persistency, the policeman's face, too, upturned, and staring, but he saw nothing of them. Below, a carriage drew up, two figures got in, and drove away . . .

That evening June and old Jolyon sat down to dinner at the usual hour. The girl was in her customary high-necked frock, old Jolyon had not dressed.

At breakfast she had spoken of the dance at Uncle Roger's, she wanted to go, she had been stupid enough, she said, not to think of asking anyone to take her. It was too late now.

Old Jolyon lifted his keen eyes. June was used to go to dances with Irene as a matter of course! And deliberately fixing his gaze on her, he asked "Why didn't she get Irene?"

No! June did not want to ask Irene; she would only go if—if her grandfather wouldn't mind just for once—for a little time!

At her look, so eager and so worn, old Jolyon had grumbly consented. He did not know what she wanted, he said, with going to a dance like this, a poor affair, he would wager; and she no more fit for it than a cat! What she wanted was sea air, and after his general meeting of the Globular Gold Concessions he was ready to take her. She didn't want to go away? Ah! she would knock herself up! Stealing a mournful look at her, he went on with his breakfast.

June went out early, and wandered restlessly about in the heat. Her little light figure that lately had moved so languidly about its business, was all on fire. She bought herself some flowers. She wanted—she meant to look her best. *He* would be there! She knew well enough that he had a card. She would show him that she did not care. But deep down in her heart she resolved that evening to win him back. She came in flushed, and talked brightly all lunch, old Jolyon was there, and he was deceived.

In the afternoon she was overtaken by a desperate fit of sobbing. She strangled the noise against the pillows of her bed, but when at last it ceased she saw in the glass a swollen face with reddened eyes, and

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violet circles round them. She stayed in the darkened room till dinner time.

All through that silent meal the struggle went on within her. She looked so shadowy and exhausted that old Jolyon told "Sankey" to countermand the carriage, he would not have her going out. She was to go to bed! She made no resistance. She went up to her room, and sat in the dark. At ten o'clock she rang for her maid.

"Bring some hot water, and go down and tell Mr. Forsyte that I feel perfectly rested. Say that if he's too tired I can go to the dance by myself."

The maid looked askance, and June turned on her imperiously. "Go," she said, "bring the hot water at once!"

Her ball-dress still lay on the sofa, and with a sort of fierce care she arrayed herself, took the flowers in her hand, and went down, her small face carried high under its burden of hair. She could hear old Jolyon in his room as she passed.

Bewildered and vexed, he was dressing. It was past ten, they would not get there till eleven; the girl

was mad. But he dared not cross her—the expression of her face at dinner haunted him.

With great ebony brushes he smoothed his hair till it shone like silver under the light; then he, too, came out on the gloomy staircase.

June met him below, and, without a word, they went to the carriage.

When, after that drive which seemed to last for ever, she entered Roger's drawing room, she disguised under a mask of resolution a very torment of nervousness and emotion. The feeling of shame at what might be called "running after him" was smothered by the dread that he might not be there, that she might not see him after all, and by that dogged resolve—somehow, she did not know how—to win him back.

The sight of the ballroom, with its gleaming floor, gave her a feeling of joy, of triumph, for she loved dancing, and when dancing she floated, so light was she, like a strenuous, eager little spirit. He would surely ask her to dance, and if he danced with her it would all be as it was before. She looked about her eagerly.

The sight of Bosinney coming with Irene from the

conservatory, with that strange look of utter absorption on his face, struck her too suddenly. They had not seen—no one should see—her distress, not even her grandfather.

She put her hand on Jolyon's arm, and said very low:

“I must go home, Gran; I feel ill.”

He hurried her away, grumbling to himself that he had known how it would be.

To her he said nothing; only when they were once more in the carriage, which by some fortunate chance had lingered near the door, he asked her. “What is it, my darling?”

Feeling her whole slender body shaken by sobs, he was terribly alarmed. She must have Blank to-morrow. He would insist upon it. He could not have her like this. . . . There, there!

June mastered her sobs, and, squeezing his hand feverishly, she lay back in her corner, her face muffled in a shawl.

He could only see her eyes, fixed and staring in the dark, but he did not cease to stroke her hand with his thin fingers.

CHAPTER IX.

EVENING AT RICHMOND.

OTHER eyes besides the eyes of Julie and of Soames had seen "those two" (as Euphemia had already begun to call them) coming from the conservatory; other eyes had noticed the look on Bosinney's face

There are moments when Nature reveals the passion hidden beneath the careless calm of her ordinary moods—violent spring flashing white on almond-blossom through the purple clouds; a snowy, moonlit peak, with its single star, soaring up to the passionate blue, or against the flames of sunset, an old yew-tree standing dark guardian of some fiery secret.

There are moments, too, when, in a picture-gallery, a work, noted by the casual spectator as " * * * Titian—remarkably fine," breaks through the defences of some Forsyte better lunched perhaps than his fellows, and holds him spell-bound in a kind of ecstasy. There

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are things, he feels—there are things here which—well, which are things. Something unreasoning, unreasonable, is upon him; when he tries to define it with the precision of a practical man, it eludes him, slips away, as the glow of the wine he has drunk is slipping away, leaving him cross, and conscious of his liver. He feels that he has been extravagant, prodigal of something; virtue has gone out of him. He did not desire this glimpse of what lay under the three stars of his catalogue. God forbid that he should know anything about the forces of Nature! God forbid that he should admit for a moment that there are such things! Once admit that, and where was he? One paid a shilling for entrance, and another for the programme.

The look which June had seen, which other Forsytes had seen, was like the sudden flashing of a candle through a hole in some imaginary canvas, behind which it was being moved—the sudden flaming-out of a vague, erratic glow, shadowy and enticing. It brought home to onlookers the consciousness that dangerous forces were at work. For a moment they noticed it with pleasure, with interest, then felt they must not notice it all.

It supplied, however, the reason of June's coming so late and disappearing again without dancing, without even shaking hands with her lover. She was ill, it was said, and no wonder.

But here they looked at each other guiltily. They had no desire to spread scandal, no desire to be ill-natured. Who would have? And to outsiders no word was breathed, unwritten law keeping them silent.

Then came the news that June had gone to the seaside with old Jolyon.

He had carried her off to Broadstairs, for which place there was just then a feeling, Yarmouth having lost caste, in spite of Nicholas, and no Forsyte going to the sea without intending to have an air for his money such as would render him bilious in a week. That fatally aristocratic tendency of the first Forsyte to drink Madeira had left his descendants undoubtedly accessible.

So June went to the sea. The family awaited developments; there was nothing else to do.

But how far—how far had “those two” gone? How far were they going to go? Could they really be going at all? Nothing could surely come of it, for neither

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of them had any money. At the most a flirtation, ending, as all such attachments should, at the proper time.

Soames's sister, Winifred Dartie, who had imbibed with the breezes of Mayfair—she lived in Green Street—more fashionable principles in regard to matrimonial behaviour than were current, for instance, in Ladbroke Grove, laughed at the idea of there being anything in it. The “little thing”—Irene was taller than herself, and it was real testimony to the solid worth of a Forsyte that she should always thus be a “little thing”—the little thing was bored. Why shouldn't she amuse herself? Soames was rather tiring, and as to Mr. Bosinney—only that buffoon George would have called him the Buccaneer—she maintained that he was very *chic*.

This dictum—that Bosinney was *chic*—caused quite a sensation. It failed to convince. That he was “good looking in a way” they were prepared to admit, but that anyone could call a man with his pronounced cheekbones, curious eyes, and soft felt hats *chic* was only another instance of Winifred's extravagant way of running after something new.

It was that famous summer when extravagance was

fashionable, when the very earth was extravagant, chestnut-trees spread with blossoms, and flowers drenched in perfume, as they had never been before; when roses blew in every garden, and for the swarming stars the nights had hardly space, when every day and all day long the sun, in full armour, swung his brazen shield above the Park, and people did strange things, lunching and dining in the open air. Unprecedented was the tale of cabs and carriages that streamed across the bridges of the shining river, bearing the upper-middle class in thousands to the green glories of Bushey, Richmond, Kew, and Hampton Court. Almost every family with any pretensions to be of the carriage-class paid one visit that year to the horse-chestnuts at Bushey, or took one drive amongst the Spanish chestnuts of Richmond Park. Bowling smoothly, if dustily, along, in a cloud of their own creation, they would stare fashionably at the antlered heads which the great slow deer raised out of a forest of bracken that promised to autumn lovers such cover as was never seen before. And now and again, as the amorous perfume of chestnut flowers and fern was drifted too near, one would say to the other: "My dear! What a peculiar scent!"

And the lime-flowers that year were of rare prime, near honey-coloured. At the corners of London squares they gave out, as the sun went down, a perfume sweeter than the honey bees had taken—a perfume that stirred a yearning unnamable in the hearts of Foisytes and their peers, taking the cool after dinner in the precincts of those gardens to which they alone had keys.

And that yearning made them linger amidst the dim shapes of flower-beds in the failing daylight, made them turn, and turn, and turn again, as though lovers were waiting for them—waiting for the last light to die away under the shadow of the branches.

Some vague sympathy evoked by the scent of the limes, some sisterly desire to see for herself, some idea of demonstrating the soundness of her dictum that there was “nothing in it;” or merely the craving to drive down to Richmond, irresistible that summer, moved the mother of the little Darties (of little Publius, of Imogen, Maud, and Benedict) to write the following note to her sister-in-law:

“June 30.

“DEAR IRENE,

“I hear that Soames is going to Henley to-morrow

for the night. • I thought it would be great fun if we made up a little party and drove down to Richmond. Will you ask Mr. Bosinney, and I will get young Flippard.

“Emily (they called their mother Emily—it was so *chic*) will lend us the carriage I will call for you and your young man at seven o’clock

“Your affectionate sister,

“WINIFRED DARTIE

“Montague believes the dinner at the Crown and Sceptre to be quite eatable.”

Montague was Dartie’s second and better-known name—his first being Moses, for he was nothing if not a man of the world

Her plan met with more opposition from Providence than so benevolent a scheme deserved In the first place young Flippard wrote

“DEAR MRS DARTIE,

“Awfully sorry. Engaged two deep.

“Yours,

“AUGUSTUS FLIPPARD.”

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It was late to send into the bye-ways' and hedges to remedy this misfortune. With the promptitude and conduct of a mother, Winifred fell back on her husband. She had, indeed, the decided but tolerant temperament that goes with a good deal of profile, fair hair, and greenish eyes. She was seldom or never at a loss; or if at a loss, was always able to convert it into a gain.

Dartie, too, was in good feather. Erotic had failed to win the Lancashire Cup. Indeed, that celebrated animal, owned as he was by a pillar of the turf, who had secretly laid many thousands against him, had not even started. The forty-eight hours that followed his scratching were among the darkest in Dartie's life.

Visions of James haunted him day and night. Black thoughts about Soames mingled with the faintest hopes. On the Friday night he got drunk, so greatly was he affected. But on Saturday morning the true Stock Exchange instinct triumphed within him. Owing some hundreds, which by no possibility could he pay he went into town and put them all on Concertina for the Saltown Borough Handicap.

As he said to Major Scroton, with whom he lunched

at the Isceum? "That little Jew boy, Nathans, had given him the tip. He didn't care a cunsh. He was in—a mucker. If it didn't come up—well then, damme, the old man would have to pay!"

A bottle of Pol Roger to his own cheek had given him a new contempt for James.

It came up. Concertina was squeezed home by her neck—a terrible squeak! But, as Dartie said: 'There was nothing like pluck!

He was by no means averse to the expedition to Richmond. He would "stand" it himself! He cherished an admiration for Irene, and wished to be on more playful terms with her.

At half-past five the Park Lane footman came round to say: 'Mrs. Forsyte was very sorry, but one of the horses was coughing!'

Undaunted by this further blow, Winifred at once despatched little Publius (now aged seven) with the nursery governess to Montpelier Square.

• They would go down in hansoms and meet at the Crown and Sceptre at 7.45.

Dartie, on being told, was pleased enough. It was better than going down with your back to the horses!

He had no objection to driving down with Irene. He supposed they would pick up the others at Montpellier Square, and swop hansoms there?

Informed that the meet was at the Crown and Sceptre, and that he would have to drive with his wife, he turned sulky, and said it was d——d slow!

At seven o'clock they started, Dartie offering to bet the driver half-a-crown he didn't do it in the three quarters of an hour.

Twice only did husband and wife exchange remarks on the way.

Dartie said. "It'll put Master Soames's nose out of joint to hear his wife's been drivin' in a hansom with Master Bosinney!"

Winifred replied. "Don't talk such nonsense, Monty!"

"Nonsense!" repeated Dartie. "You don't know women, my fine lady!"

On the other occasion he merely asked "How am I looking? A bit puffy about the gills? That fizz old George is so fond of is a windy wine!"

He had been lunching with George Forsyte at the Haversnake.

Bosinney and Irene had arrived before them. They

were standing in one of the long French windows overlooking the river.

Windows that summer were open all day long, and all night too, and day and night the scents of flowers and trees came in, the hot scent of parching grass, and the cool scent of the heavy dews.

To the eye of the observant Dartie his two guests did not appear to be making much running, standing there close together, without a word. Rosinney was a hungry-looking creature—not much go about *him*!

He left them to Winifred, however, and busied himself to order the dinner.

A Forsyte will require good, if not delicate feeding, but a Dartie will tax the resources of a Crown and Sceptre. Living, as he does, from hand to mouth, nothing is too good for him to eat, and he will eat it. His drink, too, will need to be carefully provided; there is much drink in this country “not good enough” for a Dartie, he will have the best. Paying for things vicariously, there is no reason why he should stint himself. To stint yourself is the mark of a fool, not of a Dartie.

The best of everything! No sounder principle on

which a man can base his life, whose father-in-law has a very considerable income, and a partiality for his grandchildren.

With his not unable eye Dartie had spotted this weakness in James the very first year after little Publius's arrival (an error); he had profited by his perspicacity. Four little Darties were now a sort of perpetual insurance.

The feature of the feast was unquestionably the red mullet. This delectable fish, brought from a considerable distance in a state of almost perfect preservation, was first fried, then boned, then served in ice, with Madeira punch in place of sauce, according to a recipe known to a few men of the world.

Nothing else calls for remark except the payment of the bill by Dartie.

He had made himself extremely agreeable throughout the meal; his bold, admiring stare seldom abandoning Irene's face and figure. As he was obliged to confess to himself, he got no change out of her—she was cool enough, as cool as her shoulders looked under their veil of creamy lace. He expected to have caught her out in some little game with Bosinney, but not a bit of it,

she kept up her end remarkably well. As for that architect chap, he was as glum as a bear with a sore head—Winifred could barely get a word out of him; he ate nothing, but he certainly took his liquor, and his face kept getting whiter, and his eyes looked queer.

It was all very amusing.

For Dartie himself was in capital form, and talked freely, with a certain poignancy, being no fool. He told two or three stories verging on the improper, a concession to the company, for his stories were not used to veiging. He proposed Irene's health in a mock speech. Nobody drank it, and Winifred said: "Don't be such a clown, Monty!"

At her suggestion they went after dinner to the public terrace overlooking the river.

"I should like to see the common people making love," she said, "it's such fun!"

There were numbers of them walking in the cool, after the day's heat, and the air was alive with the sound of voices, coarse and loud, or soft as though murmuring secrets.

It was not long before Winifred's better sense—she was the only Forsyte present—secured them an empty

bench They sat down in a row. A heavy tree spread a thick canopy above their heads, and the haze darkened slowly over the river.

Dartie sat at the end, next to him Irene, then Bosinney, then Winifred. There was hardly room for four, and the man of the world could feel Irene's arm crushed against his own, he knew that she could not withdraw it without seeming rude, and this amused him, he devised every now and again a movement that would bring her closer still. He thought "That Buccaneer Johnny sha'n't have it all to himself! It's a pretty tight fit, certainly!"

From far down below on the dark river came drifting the tinkle of a mandoline, and voices singing the old round:

"A boat, a boat, unto the ferry,
For we'll go over and be merry,
And laugh, and quaff, and drink brown sherry!"

And suddenly the moon appeared, young and tender, floating upon her back from behind a tree, and as though she had breathed, the air was cooler, but down that cooler air came always the warm odour of the limes.

Over his cigar Dartie peered round at Bosinney, who was sitting with his arms crossed, staring straight in front of him, and on his face the look of a man being tortured

And Dartie shot a glance at the face between, so veiled by the overhanging shadow that it was but like a darker piece of the darkness shaped and breathed on, soft, mysterious, enticing.

A hush had fallen on the noisy terrace, as if all the strollers were thinking secrets too precious to be spoken.

And Dartie thought: "Ah! Women!"

The glow died above the river, the singing ceased; the young moon hid behind a tree, and all was dark. He pressed himself against Irene.

He was not alarmed at the shuddering that ran through the limbs he touched, or at the troubled, scornful look of her eyes. He felt her trying to draw herself away, and smiled.

It must be confessed that the man of the world had drunk quite as much as was good for him

With thick lips parted under his well-curled mons-

taches, and his bold eyes aslant upon her, he had the malicious look of a satyr.

Along the pathway of sky between the hedges of the tree-tops the stars clustered forth; like mortals beneath, they seemed to shift and swarm and whisper. Then on the terrace the buzz broke out once more, and Dartie thought: "Ah! he's a poor, hungry-looking devil, that Bosinney!" and again he pressed himself against Irene.

The movement deserved a better success. She rose, and they all followed her.

The man of the world was more than ever determined to see what she was made of. Along the terrace he kept close at her elbow. He had within him much good wine. There was the long drive home, the long drive and the warm dark and the pleasant closeness of the hansom-cab—with its insulation from the world devised by some great and good man. That hungry architect chap might drive with his wife—he wished him joy of her! And conscious that his voice was not too steady, he was careful not to speak; but a smile had become fixed on his thick lips.

They strolled along toward the cabs awaiting them

at the farther end. His plan had the merit of all great plans, an almost brutal simplicity—he would merely keep at her elbow till she got in, and get in quickly after her.

But when Irene reached the cab she did not get in; she slipped, instead, to the horse's head. Dartie was not at the moment sufficiently master of his legs to follow. She stood stroking the horse's nose, and, to his annoyance, Bosinney was at her side first. She turned and spoke to him rapidly, in a low voice; the words "That man" reached Dartie. He stood stubbornly by the cab-step, waiting for her to come back. He knew a trick worth two of that!

Here, in the lamplight, his figure (no more than medium height), well squared in its white evening waistcoat, his light overcoat flung over his arm, a pink flower in his buttonhole, and on his dark face that look of confident, good-humoured insolence, he was at his best—a thorough man of the world.

Winifred was already in her cab. Dartie reflected that Bosinney would have a poorish time in that cab if he didn't look sharp! Suddenly he received a push which nearly overturned him in the road. Bosinney's

voice hissed in his ear: "I am taking Irene back; do you understand?" He saw a face white with passion, and eyes that glared at him like a wild cat's.

"Eh?" he stammered. "What? Not a bit! You *take my wife!*"

"*Get away!*" hissed Bosinney—"or I'll throw you into the road!"

Dartie recoiled; he saw as plainly as possible that the fellow meant it. In the space he made Irene had slipped by, her dress brushed his legs. Bosinney stepped in after her.

"Go on!" he heard the Buccaneer cry. The cabman flicked his horse. It sprang forward.

Dartie stood for a moment dumbfounded, then, dashing at the cab where his wife sat, he scrambled in.

"Drive on!" he shouted to the driver, "and don't you lose sight of that fellow in front!"

Seated by his wife's side, he burst into imprecations. Calming himself at last with a supreme effort, he added: "A pretty mess you've made of it, to let the Buccaneer drive home with her, why on earth couldn't you keep hold of him? He's mad with love; any fool can see that!"

He drowned Winifred's rejoinder with fresh calls to the Almighty; nor was it until they reached Barnes that he ceased a Jeremiad, in the course of which he had abused her, her father, her brother, *Frederic Bosinney, the name of Forsyte, his own children, and cursed the day when he had ever married.*

Winifred, a woman of strong character, let him have his say, at the end of which he lapsed into sulky silence. His angry eyes never deserted the back of that cab, which, like a lost chance, haunted the darkness in front of him.

Fortunately he could not hear Bosinney's passionate pleading—that pleading which the man of the world's conduct had let loose like a flood, he could not see her shivering, as though some garment had been torn from her, nor her eyes, black and mournful, like the eyes of a beaten child. He could not hear Bosinney entreating, entreating, always entreating, could not hear her sudden, soft weeping, nor see that poor, hungry-looking devil, awed and trembling, humbly touching her hand.

In Montpelier Square their cabman, following his instructions to the letter, faithfully drew up behind the

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cab in front. The Darties saw Bosinney spring out and Irene follow, and hasten up the steps with bent head. She evidently had her key in her hand, for she disappeared at once. It was impossible to tell whether she had turned to speak to Bosinney.

The latter came walking past their cab; both husband and wife had an admirable view of his face in the light of a street-lamp. It was working with violent emotion.

"Good night, Mr. Bosinney!" called Winifred.

Bosinney started, clawed off his hat, and hurried on. He had obviously forgotten their existence.

"There!" said Dartie, "did you see the beast's face? What did I say? Fine games!" He improved the occasion.

There had so clearly been a crisis in the cab that Winifred was unable to defend her theory.

She said. "I shall say nothing about it. I don't see any use in making a fuss!"

With that view Dartie at once concurred; looking upon James as a private preserve, he disapproved of his being disturbed by the troubles of others.

"Quite right," he said; "let Soames look after himself. He's jolly well able to!"

Thus speaking, the Darties entered their habitat in Green Street, the rent of which was paid by James, and sought a well-earned rest. The hour was midnight, and no Forsytes remained abroad in the streets to spy out Bosinney's wanderings, to see him return and stand against the rails of the Square garden, back from the glow of the street-lamp; to see him stand there in the shadow of trees, watching the house where in the dark was hidden she whom he would have given the world to see for a single minute—she who was now to him the breath of the lime-trees, the meaning of the light and the darkness, the very beating of his own heart.

CHAPTER X.

DIAGNOSIS OF A FORSYTE

It is in the nature of a Forsyte to be ignorant that he is a Forsyte, but young Jolyon was well aware of being one. He had not known it till after the decisive step which had made him an outcast, since then the knowledge had been with him continually. He felt it throughout his alliance, throughout all his dealings, with his second wife, who was emphatically not a Forsyte

He knew that if he had not possessed in great measure the eye for what he wanted, the tenacity to hold on to it, the sense of the folly of wasting that for which he had given so big a price—in other words, the “sense of property”—he could never have retained her (perhaps never would have desired to retain her) with him through all the financial troubles, slights, and mis-

constructions of those fifteen years, never have induced her to marry him on the death of his first wife, never have lived it all through, and come up, ~~as~~ it were, thin, but smiling.

He was one of those men who, seated cross-legged like miniature Chinese idols in the cages of their own hearts, are ever smiling at themselves a doubting smile. Not that this smile, so intimate and eternal, interfered with his actions, which, like his chin and his temperament, were quite a peculiar blend of softness and determination.

He was conscious, too, of being a Forsyte in his work, that painting of water-colours to which he devoted so much energy, always with an eye on himself, as though he could not take so unpractical a pursuit quite seriously, and always with a certain queer uneasiness that he did not make more money at it.

It was, then, this consciousness of what it meant to be a Forsyte, that made him receive the following letter from old Jolyon, with a mixture of sympathy and disgust.

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"SHELDRAKE HOUSE,

"BROADSTAIRS,

"July 1.

"MY DEAR JO,"

(The Dad's handwriting had altered very little in the thirty odd years that he remembered it.)

"We have been here now a fortnight, and have had good weather on the whole. The air is bracing, but my liver is out of order, and I shall be glad enough to get back to town. I cannot say much for June, her health and spirits are very indifferent, and I don't see what is to come of it. She says nothing, but it is clear that she is harping on this engagement, which is an engagement and no engagement, and—goodness knows what. I have grave doubts whether she ought to be allowed to return to London in the present state of affairs, but she is so self-willed that she might take it into her head to come up at any moment. The fact is someone ought to speak to Bosinney and ascertain what he means. I'm afraid of this myself, for I should certainly rap him over the knuckles, but I thought that you, knowing him at the Club, might put in a word, and get to ascertain what the fellow is about. You will of course in no way commit June. I shall be glad to

hear from you in the course of a few days whether you have succeeded in gaining any information. The situation is very distressing to me, I worry about it at night. With my love to Jolly and Holly.

"I am,

"Your affect. father,

"JOLYON FORSYTE."

Young Jolyon pondered this letter so long and seriously that his wife noticed his preoccupation, and asked him what was the matter. He replied: "Nothing."

It was a fixed principle with him never to allude to June. She might take alarm, he did not know what she might think; he hastened, therefore, to banish from his manner all traces of absorption, but in this he was about as successful as his father would have been, for he had inherited all old Jolyon's transparency in matters of domestic finesse; and young Mrs. Jolyon, busying herself over the affairs of the house, went about with tightened lips, stealing at him unfathomable looks.

He started for the Club in the afternoon with the

letter in his pocket, and without having made up his mind.

To sound a man as to "his intentions" was peculiarly unpleasant to him, nor did his own anomalous position diminish this unpleasantness. It was so like his family, so like all the people they knew and mixed with, to enforce what they called their rights over a man, to bring him up to the mark; so like them to carry their business principles into their private relations!

And how that phrase in the letter—"You will, of course, in no way commit June"—gave the whole thing away

Yet the letter, with the personal grievance, the concern for June, the "rap over the knuckles," was all so natural. No wonder his father wanted to know what Bosinney meant, no wonder he was angry.

It was difficult to refuse! But why give the thing to him to do? That was surely quite unbecoming, but so long as a Forsyte got what he was after, he was not too particular about the means, provided appearances were saved.

How should he set about it, or how refuse? Both seemed impossible. So, young Jolyon!

He arrived at the Club at three o'clock, and the first person he saw was Bosinney himself, seated in a corner, staring out of the window.

Young Jolyon sat down not far off, and began nervously to reconsider his position. He looked covertly at Bosinney sitting there unconscious. He did not know him very well, and studied him attentively for perhaps the first time, an unusual-looking man, unlike in dress, face, and manner to most of the other members of the Club— young Jolyon himself, however different he had become in mood and temper, had always retained the neat reticence of Forsyte appearance. He alone among Forsytes was ignorant of Bosinney's nickname. The man was unusual, not eccentric, but unusual; he looked worn, too, haggard, hollow in the cheeks beneath those broad, high cheekbones, though without any appearance of ill-health, for he was strongly built, with curly hair that seemed to show all the vitality of a fine constitution.

Something in his face and attitude touched young Jolyon. He knew what suffering was like, and this man looked as if he were suffering.

He got up and touched his arm,

Bosinney started, but exhibited no sign of embarrassment on seeing who it was.

Young Jolyon sat down.

"I haven't seen you for a long time," he said "How are you getting on with my cousin's house?"

"It'll be finished in about a week"

"I congratulate you!"

"Thanks—I don't know that it's much of a subject for congratulation."

"No?", queried young Jolyon; "I should have thought you'd be glad to get a long job like that off your hands; but I suppose you feel it much as I do when I part with a picture—a sort of child?"

He looked kindly at Bosinney.

"Yes," said the latter more cordially, "it goes out from you and there's an end of it. I didn't know you painted."

"Only water-colours, I can't say I believe in my work."

"Don't believe in it? Then how can you do it? Work's no use unless you believe in it!"

"Good," said young Jolyon; "it's exactly what I've always said. By-the-bye, have you noticed that when-

ever one says 'Good,' one always adds 'it's exactly what I've always said!' But if you ask me how I do it, I answer, because I'm a Forsyte."

"A Forsyte! I never thought of you as one!"

"A Forsyte," replied young Jolyon, "is not an uncommon animal. There are hundreds among the members of this Club. Hundreds out there in the streets; you meet them wherever you go!"

"And how do you tell them, may I ask?" said Bosinney.

"By their sense of property." A Forsyte takes a practical—one might say a commonsense—view of things, and a practical view of things is based fundamentally on a sense of property. A Forsyte, you will notice, never gives himself away."

"Joking?"

Young Jolyon's eye twinkled.

"Not much. As a Forsyte myself, I have no business to talk. But I'm a kind of thoroughbred mongrel; now, there's no mistaking you. You're as different from me as I am from my Uncle James, who is the perfect specimen of a Forsyte. His sense of property is extreme, while you have practically none. Without me in

between, you would seem like a different species. I'm the missing link. We are, of course, all of us the slaves of property, and I admit that it's a question of degree, but what I call a 'Forsyte' is a man who is decidedly more than less a slave of property. He knows a good thing, he knows a safe thing, and his grip on property—it doesn't matter whether it be wives, houses, money, or reputation—is his hall-mark."

"Ah!" murmured Bosinney. "You should patent the word."

"I should like," said young Jolyon, "to lecture on it: 'Properties and quality of a Forsyte. This little animal, disturbed by the ridicule of his own sort, is unaffected in his motions by the laughter of strange creatures (you or I). Hereditarily disposed to myopia, he recognises only the persons and habitats of his own species, amongst which he passes an existence of competitive tranquillity.'"

"You talk of them," said Bosinney, "as if they were half England."

"They are," repeated young Jolyon, "half England, and the better half, too, the safe half, the three per cent half, the half that counts. It's their wealth and security

that makes everything possible; makes your art possible, makes literature, science, even religion, possible. Without Forsytes, who believe in none of these things, but turn them all to use, where should we be? My dear sir, the Forsytes are the middlemen, the commercials, the pillars of society, the corner-stones of convention; everything that is admirable!"

"I don't know whether I catch your drift," said Bosinney, "but I fancy there are plenty of Forsytes, as you call them, in my profession."

"Certainly," replied young Lyon. "The great majority of architects, painters, or writers have no principles, like any other Forsytes. Art, literature, religion, survive by virtue of the few cranks who really believe in such things, and the many Forsytes who make a commercial use of them. At a low estimate, three-fourths of our Royal Academicians are Forsytes, seven-eighths of our novelists, a large proportion of the press. Of science I can't speak, they are magnificently represented in religion; in the House of Commons perhaps more numerous than anywhere, the aristocracy speaks for itself. But I'm not laughing. It is dangerous to go against the majority—and what a majority!" He fixed

his eyes on Bosinney: "It's dangerous 'to let anything carry you away—a house, a picture, a—woman!"

They looked at each other. And, as though he had done that which no Forsyte did—given himself away, young Jolyon drew into his shell. Bosinney broke the silence.

"Why do you take your own people as the type?" said he.

"My people," replied young Jolyon, "are not very extreme, and they have their own private peculiarities, like every other family, but they possess in a remarkable degree those two qualities which are the real tests of a Forsyte—the power of never being able to give yourself up to anything soul and body, and the 'sense of property.'"

Bosinney smiled: "How about the big one, for instance?"

"Do you mean Swithin?" asked young Jolyon. "Ah! in Swithin there's something primeval still. The town and middle-class life haven't digested him yet. All the old centuries of farmwork and brute force have settled in him, and there they've stuck, for all he's so distinguished."

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Bosinney seemed to ponder. "Well, you've hit your cousin Soames off to the life," he said suddenly. "He'll never blow his brains out."

Young Jolyon shot at him a penetrating glance.

"No," he said; "he won't. That's why he's to be reckoned with. Look out for their grip! It's easy to laugh, but don't mistake me. It doesn't do to despise a Forsyte; it doesn't do to disregard them!"

"Yet you've done it yourself!"

Young Jolyon acknowledged the hit by losing his smile.

"You forget," he said with a queer pride, "I can hold on, too—I'm a Forsyte myself. We're all in the path of great forces. The man who leaves the shelter of the wall—well—you know what I mean. I don't," he ended very low, as though uttering a threat, "recommend every man to—go—my—way. It depends."

The colour rushed into Bosinney's face, but soon receded, leaving it sallow-brown as before. He gave a short laugh, that left his lips fixed in a queer, fierce smile; his eyes mocked young Jolyon.

"Thanks," he said. "It's deuced kind of you. But you're not the only chaps that can hold on." He rose.

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Young Jolyon looked after him as he walked away, and, resting his head on his hand, sighed.

In the drowsy, almost empty room the only sounds were the rustle of newspapers, the scraping of matches being struck. He stayed a long time without moving, living over again those days when he, too, had sat long hours watching the clock, waiting for the minutes to pass—long hours full of the torments of uncertainty, and of a fierce, sweet aching, and the slow, delicious agony of that season came back to him with its old poignancy. The sight of Bosinney, with his haggard face, and his restless eyes always wandering to the clock, had roused in him a pity, with which was mingled strange, irresistible envy.

He knew the signs so well. Whither was he going—to what sort of fate? What kind of woman was it who was drawing him to her by that magnetic force which no consideration of honour, no principle, no interest could withstand, from which the only escape was flight.

Flight! But why should Bosinney fly? A man fled when he was in danger of destroying hearth and home, when there were children, when he felt himself

trampling down ideals, breaking something. But here, so he had heard, it was all broken to his hand.

He himself had not fled, nor would he fly if it were all to come over again Yet he had gone further than Bosinney, had broken up his own unhappy home, not someone else's. And the old saying came back to him "A man's fate lies in his own heart."

In his own heart! The proof of the pudding was in the eating—Bosinney had still to eat his pudding

His thoughts passed to the woman, the woman whom he did not know, but the outline of whose story he had heard.

An unhappy marriage! No ill-treatment—only that undefinable *malaise*, that terrible blight which killed all sweetness under Heaven, and so from day to day, from night to night, from week to week, from year to year, till death should end it!

But young Jolyon, the bitterness of whose own feelings time had assuaged, saw Soames's side of the question too. Whence should a man like his cousin, saturated with all the prejudices and beliefs of his class, draw the insight or inspiration necessary to break up

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this life? It was a question of imagination, of projecting himself into the future beyond the unpleasant gossip, sneers, and tattle that followed on such separations, beyond the passing pangs that the lack of the sight of her would cause, beyond the grave disapproval of the worthy. But few men, and especially few men of Soames's class, had imagination enough for that. A deal of mortals in this world, and not enough imagination to go round! And sweet Heaven, what a difference between theory and practice; many a man, perhaps even Soames, held chivalrous views on such matters, who when the shoe pinched found a distinguishing factor that made of himself an exception.

Then, too, he distrusted his judgment. He had been through the experience himself, had tasted to the dregs the bitterness of an unhappy marriage, and how could he take the wide and dispassionate view of those who had never been within sound of the battle? His evidence was too first-hand—like the evidence on military matters of a soldier who has been through much active service, against that of civilians who have not suffered the disadvantage of seeing things too close. Most people would consider such a marriage as that of

Soames and Irene quite fairly successful, he had money, she had beauty; it was a case for compromise. There was no reason why they should not jog along, even if they hated each other. It would not matter if they went their own ways a little so long as the decencies were observed—the sanctity of the marriage tie, of the common home, respected. Half the marriages of the upper classes were conducted on these lines. Do not offend the susceptibilities of Society; do not offend the susceptibilities of the Church. To avoid offending these is worth the sacrifice of any private feelings. The advantages of the stable home are visible, tangible, so many pieces of property; there is no risk in the *statu quo*. To break up a home is at the best a dangerous experiment, and selfish into the bargain.

This was the case for the defence, and young Jolyon sighed.

“The core of it all,” he thought, “is property, but there are many people who would not like it put that way. To them it is ‘the sanctity of the marriage tie;’ but the sanctity of the marriage tie is dependent on the sanctity of the family, and the sanctity of the family is dependent on the sanctity of property. And yet I imagine

all these people are followers of One who never owned anything. It is curious!"

And again young Jolyon sighed.

"Am I going on my way home to ask any poor devils I meet to share my dinner, which will then be too little for myself, or, at all events, for my wife, who is necessary to my health and happiness? It may be that after all Soames does well to exercise his rights and support by his practice the sacred principle of property which benefits us all, with the exception of those who—suffer by the process."

And so he left his chair, threaded his way through the maze of seats, took his hat, and languidly up the hot streets crowded with carriages, reeking with dusty odours, wended his way home.

Before reaching Wistaria Avenue he removed old Jolyon's letter from his pocket, and tearing it carefully into tiny pieces, scattered them in the dust of the road.

He let himself in with his key, and called his wife's name. But she had gone out, taking Jolly and Holly, and the house was empty, alone in the garden the dog Balthazar lay in the shade snapping at flies.

Young Jolyon took his seat there, too, under the pear-tree that bore no fruit.

CHAPTER XI.

BOSINNEY ON PAROLE.

THE day after the evening at Richmond Soames returned from Henley by a morning train. Not constitutionally interested in amphibious sports, his visit had been one of business rather than pleasure, a client of some importance having asked him down.

He went straight to the City, but finding things slack, he left at three o'clock, glad of this chance to get home quietly. Irene did not expect him. Not that he had any desire to spy on her actions, but there was no harm in thus unexpectedly surveying the scene.

After changing to Park clothes he went into the drawing-room. She was sitting idly in the corner of the sofa, her favourite seat; and there were circles under her eyes, as though she had not slept.

He asked "How is it you're in? Are you expecting somebody?"

"Yes—that is, not particularly."

"Who?"

"Mr. Bosinney said he might come."

"Bosinney. He ought to be at work."

To this she made no answer.

"Well," said Soames, "I want you to come out to the Stores with me, and after that we'll go to the Park."

"I don't want to go out; I have a headache."

Soames replied: "If ever I want you to do anything, you've always got a headache. It'll do you good to come and sit under the trees."

She did not answer.

Soames was silent for some minutes; at last he said: "I don't know what your idea of a wife's duty is. I never have known!"

He had not expected her to reply, but she did.

"I have tried to do what you want; it's not my fault that I haven't been able to put my heart into it."

"Whose fault is it, then?" He watched her askance.

"Before we were married you promised to let me go if our marriage was not a success. Is it a success?"

Soames frowned.

"Success," he stammered—"it would be a success if you behaved yourself properly!"

"I have tried," said Irene. "Will you let me go?"

Soames turned away. Secretly alarmed, he took refuge in bluster.

"Let you go? You don't know what you're talking about. Let you go? How can I let you go? We're married, aren't we? Then, what are you talking about? For God's sake, don't let's have any of this sort of nonsense! Get your hat on, and come and sit in the Park."

"Then, you won't let me go?"

He felt her eyes resting on him with a strange, touching look.

"Let you go!" he said; "and what on earth would you do with yourself if I did? You've got no money!"

"I could manage somehow."

He took a swift turn up and down the room; then came and stood before her.

"Understand," he said, "once and for all, I won't have you say this sort of thing. Go and get your hat on!"

She did not move.

"I suppose," said Soames, "you don't want to miss Bosinney if he comes!"

Irene got up slowly and left the room. She came down with her hat on.

They went out.

In the Park, the motley hour of mid-afternoon, when foreigners and other pathetic folk drive, thinking themselves to be in fashion, had passed, the right, the proper, hour had come, was nearly gone, before Soames and Irene seated themselves under the Achilles statue.

It was some time since he had enjoyed her company in the Park. That was one of the past delights of the first two seasons of his married life, when to feel himself the possessor of this gracious creature before all London had been his greatest, though secret, pride. How many afternoons had he not sat beside her, extremely neat, with light grey gloves and faint, supercilious smile, nodding to acquaintances, and now and again removing his hat!

His light grey gloves were still on his hands, and on his lips his smile sardonic, but where the feeling in his heart?

The seats were emptying fast, but still he kept her

there, silent and pale, as though to work out a secret punishment. Once or twice he made some comment, and she bent her head, or answered "Yes" with a tired smile.

Along the rails a man was walking so fast that people stared after him when he passed.

"Look at that ass!" said Soames; "he must be mad to walk like that in this heat!"

He turned; Irene had made a rapid movement.

"Hallo!" he said, "it's our friend the Buccaneer!"

And he sat still, with his sneering smile, conscious that Irene was sitting still, and smiling too.

"Will she bow to him?" he thought.

But she made no sign.

Bosinney reached the end of the rails, and came walking back amongst the chairs, quartering his ground like a pointer. When he saw them he stopped dead, and raised his hat

The smile never left Soames's face; he also took off his hat.

Bosinney came up, looking exhausted, like a man after hard physical exercise; the sweat stood in drops on his brow, and Soames's smile seemed to say: "You've

had a trying time, my friend! . . . What *are you* doing in the Park?" he asked. "We thought you despised such frivolity!"

Bosinney did not seem to hear; he made his answer to Irene: "I've been round to your place; I hoped I should find you in."

Somebody ⁴tapped Soames on the back, and spoke to him; and in the exchange of those platitudes over his shoulder, he missed her answer, and took a resolution.

"We're just going in," he said to Bosinney; "you'd better come back to dinner with us." Into that invitation he put a strange bravado, a stranger pathos: "You can't deceive me," his look and voice seemed saying, "but see—I trust you—I'm not afraid of you!"

They started back to Montpellier Square together, Irene between them. In the crowded streets Soames went on in front. He did not listen to their conversation; the strange resolution of trustfulness he had taken seemed to animate even his secret conduct. Like a gambler, he said to himself: "It's a card I dare not throw away—I must play it for what it's worth. I have not too many chances."

He dressed slowly, heard her leave her room and go downstairs, and, for full five minutes after, dawdled about in his dressing-room. Then he went down, purposely shutting the door loudly to show that he was coming. He found them standing by the hearth, perhaps talking, perhaps not; he could not say.

He played his part out in the farce, the long evening through—his manner to his guest more friendly than it had ever been before; and when at last Bosinney went, he said. "You must come again soon; Irene likes to have you to talk about the house!" Again his voice had the strange bravado and the stranger pathos; but his hand was as cold as ice.

Loyal to his resolution, he turned away from their parting, turned away from his wife as she stood under the hanging lamp to say good night—away from the sight of her golden head shining so under the light, of her smiling mournful lips; away from the sight of Bosinney's eyes looking at her, so like a dog's looking at its master.

And he went to bed with the certainty that Bosinney was in love with his wife.

The summer night was hot, so hot and still that

through every opened window came in but hotter air. For long hours he lay listening to her breathing.

She could sleep, but he must lie awake. And, lying awake, he hardened himself to play the part of the serene and trusting husband.

In the small hours he slipped out of bed, and passing into his dressing-room, leaned by the open window.

He could hardly breathe

A night four years ago came back to him—the night but one before his marriage; as hot and stifling as this.

He remembered how he had lain in a long cane chair in the window of his sitting-room off Victoria Street. Down below in a side street a man had banged at a door, a woman had cried out, he remembered, as though it were now, the sound of the scuffle, the slam of the door, the dead silence that followed. And then the early water-cart, cleansing the reek of the streets, had approached through the strange-seeming, useless lamp-light, he seemed to hear again its rumble, nearer and nearer, till it passed and slowly died away.

He leaned far out of the dressing-room window, over

the little court below, and saw the first light spread. The outlines of dark walls and roofs were blurred for a moment, then came out sharper than before.

He remembered how that other night he had watched the lamps paling all the length of Victoria Street; how he had hurried on his clothes and gone down into the street, down past houses and squares, to the street where she was staying, and there had stood and looked at the front of the little house, as still and grey as the face of a dead man.

And suddenly it shot through his mind, like a sick man's fancy. What's *he* doing?—that fellow who haunts me, who was here this evening, who's in love with my wife—prowling out there, perhaps, looking for her as I know he was looking for her this afternoon, watching my house now, for all I can tell!

He stole across the landing to the front of the house, stealthily drew aside a blind, and raised a window.

The grey light clung about the trees of the square, as though Night, like a great downy moth, had brushed them with her wings. The lamps were still alight, all pale, but not a soul stirred—no living thing in sight!

Yet suddenly, very faint, far off in the deathly still-

ness, he heard a cry writhing, like the voice of some wandering soul barred out of heaven, and crying for its happiness. There it was again—again! Soames shut the window shuddering.

Then he thought: "Ah! it's only the peacocks, across the water."

CHAPTER XII.

JUNE PAYS SOME CALLS.

OLD JOLYON stood in the narrow hall at Broadstairs, inhaling that odour of oilcloth and herrings which permeates all respectable seaside lodging-houses. On a chair—a shiny leather chair, displaying its horsehair through a hole in the top left-hand corner—stood a black despatch case. This he was filling with papers, with the *Times*, and a bottle of *eau de Cologne*. He had meetings that day of the “Globular Gold Concessions” and the “New Colliery Company, Limited,” to which he was going up, for he never missed a Board, to “miss a Board” would be one more piece of evidence that he was growing old, and this his jealous Forsyte spirit could not bear.

His eyes, as he filled that black despatch case, looked as if at any moment they might blaze up with anger. So gleams the eye of a schoolboy, baited by a

ring of his companions; but he controls himself, deterred by the fearful odds against him. And old Jolyon controlled himself, keeping down, with his masterful restraint now slowly wearing out, the irritation fostered in him by the conditions of his life.

He had received from his son an unpractical letter, in which by rambling generalities the boy seemed trying to get out of answering a plain question "I've seen Bosinney," he said, "he is not a criminal. The more I see of people the more I am convinced that they are never good or bad—merely comic, or pathetic. You probably don't agree with me!"

Old Jolyon did not, he considered it cynical to so express oneself, he had not yet reached that point of old age when even Forsytes, bereft of those illusions and principles which they have cherished carefully for practical purposes but never believed in, bereft of all corporeal enjoyment, stricken to the very heart by having nothing left to hope for—break through the barriers of reserve and say things they would never have believed themselves capable of saying.

Perhaps he did not believe in "Goodness" and "Badness" any more than his son, but as he would

have said He didn't know—couldn't tell; there might be something in it; and why, by an unnecessary expression of disbelief, deprive yourself of possible advantage?

Accustomed to spend his holidays among the mountains, though (like a true Forsyte) he had never attempted anything too adventurous or too foolhardy, he had been passionately fond of them. And when the wonderful view (mentioned in Baedeker—"fatiguing but repaying") was disclosed to him after the effort of the climb, he had doubtless felt the existence of some great, dignified principle crowning the chaotic strivings, the petty precipices, and ironic little dark chasms of life. This was as near to religion, perhaps, as his practical spirit had ever gone.

But it was many years since he had been to the mountains. He had taken June there two seasons running, after his wife died, and had realised bitterly that his walking days were over.

To that old mountain given confidence in a supreme order of things he had long been a stranger.

He knew himself to be old, yet he felt young, and this troubled him. It troubled and puzzled him, too,

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to think that he, who had always been so careful, should be father and grandfather to such as seemed born to disaster. He had nothing to say against Jo—who could say anything against the boy, an amiable chap?—but his position was deplorable, and this business of June's nearly as bad. It seemed like a fatality, and a fatality was one of those things no man of his character could either understand or put up with.

In writing to his son he did not really hope that anything would come of it. Since the ball at Roger's he had seen too clearly how the land lay—he could put two and two together quicker than most men—and, with the example of his own son before his eyes, knew better than any Forsyte of them all that the pale flame singes men's wings whether they will or no.

In the days before June's engagement, when she and Mrs. Soames were always together, he had seen enough of Irene to feel the spell she cast over men. She was not a flirt, not even a coquette—words dear to the heart of his generation, which loved to define things by a good, broad, inadequate word—but she was dangerous. He could not say why. Tell him of a quality innate in some women—a seductive power

beyond their own control! He would but answer "Humbug!" She was dangerous, and there was an end of it. He wanted to close his eyes to that affair. If it was, it was; he did not want to hear any more about it—he only wanted to save June's position and her peace of mind. He still hoped she might once more become a comfort to himself.

And so he had written. He got little enough out of the answer. As to what young Jolyon had made of the interview, there was practically only the queer sentence: "I gather that he's in the stream." The stream! What stream? What was this new-fangled way of talking?

He sighed, and folded the last of the papers under the flap of the bag; he knew well enough what was meant.

June came out of the dining-room, and helped him on with his summer coat. From her costume, and the expression of her little resolute face, he saw at once what was coming.

"I'm going with you," she said.

"Nonsense, my dear; I go straight into the City. I can't have you racketting about!"

"I must see old Mrs. Smeech "

"Oh, ~~your~~ precious 'lame ducks!'" grumbled old Jolyon. He did not believe her excuse, but ceased his opposition. There was no doing anything with that pertinacity of hers.

At Victoria he put her into the carriage which had been ordered for himself—a characteristic action, for he had no petty selfishness.

"Now, don't you go tiring yourself, my darling," he said, and took a cab on into the City.

June went first to a back-street in Paddington, where Mrs. Smeech, her "lame duck," lived—an aged person, connected with the charring interest, but after half an hour spent in hearing her habitually lamentable recital, and diagnosing her into temporary comfort, she went on to Stanhope Gate. The great house was closed and dark.

She had^d decided to learn something at all costs. It was better to face the worst, and have it over. And this was her plan. To go first to Phil's aunt, Mrs. Baynes, and, failing information there, to liene herself. She had no clear notion of what she would gain by these visits.

At three o'clock she was in Lowndes Square. With a woman's instinct when trouble is to be faced, she had put on her best frock, and went to the battle with a glance as courageous as old Jolyon's itself. Her tremors had passed into eagerness.

Mrs. Baynes, Bosinney's aunt (Louisa was her name), was in her kitchen when June was announced, organising the cook, for she was an excellent housewife, and, as Baynes always said, there was "a lot in a good dinner." He did his best work after dinner. It was Baynes who built that remarkably fine row of tall crimson houses in Kensington which compete with so many others for the title of "the ugliest in London."

On hearing June's name, she went hurriedly to her bedroom, and, taking two large bracelets from a red morocco case in a locked drawer, put them on her white wrists—for she possessed in a remarkable degree that "sense of property," which, as we know, is the touchstone of Forsyteism, and the foundation of good morality.

Her figure, of medium height and broad build, with a tendency to embonpoint, was reflected by the mirror

of her white-wood wardrobe, in a gown made under her own organisation, of one of those half-tints, reminiscent of the distempered walls of corridors in large hotels. She raised her hands to her hair, which she wore *à la Princesse de Galles*, and touched it here and there, settling it more firmly on her head, and her eyes were full of an unconscious realism, as though she were looking in the face one of life's sordid facts, and making the best of it. In youth her cheeks had been of cream and roses, but they were mottled now by middle-age, and again that hard, ugly directness came into her eyes as she dabbed a powder-puff across her forehead. Putting the puff down, she stood quite still before the glass, arranging a smile over her high, important nose, her chin, (never large, and now growing smaller with the increase of her neck), her thin-lipped, down-drooping mouth. Quickly, not to lose the effect, she grasped her skirts strongly in both hands, and went downstairs.

She had been hoping for this visit for some time past. Whispers had reached her that things were not all right between her nephew and his *fiancée*. Neither of them had been near her for weeks. She had asked

Phil to dinner many times; his invariable answer had been "Too busy."

Her instinct was alarmed, and the instinct in such matters of this excellent woman was keen. She ought to have been à Forsyte; in young Jolyon's sense of the word, she certainly had that privilege, and merits description as such.

She had married off her three daughters in a way that people said was beyond their deserts, for they had the professional plainness only to be found, as a rule, among the female kind of the more legal callings. Her name was upon the committees of numberless charities; connected with the Church—dances, theatricals, or bazaars—and she never lent her name unless sure beforehand that everything had been thoroughly organised.

She believed, as she often said, in putting things on a commercial basis; the proper function of the Church, of charity, indeed, of everything, was to strengthen the fabric of "Society." Individual action, therefore, she considered immoral. Organisation was the only thing, for by organisation alone could you feel sure that you were getting a return for your money. Organisation—

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and again, organisation! And there is no doubt that she was what old Jolyon called her—"a 'dab' at that"—he went further, he called her "a humbug."

The enterprises to which she lent her name were organised so admirably that by the time the takings were handed over, they were indeed skim milk divested of all cream of human kindness. But as she often justly remarked, sentiment was to be deprecated. She was, in fact, a little academic.

This great and good woman, so highly thought of in ecclesiastical circles, was one of the principal priestesses in the temple of Forsyteism, keeping alive day and night a sacred flame to the God of Property, whose altar is inscribed with those inspiring words: "Nothing for nothing, and really remarkably little for sixpence."

When she entered a room it was felt that something substantial had come in, which was probably the reason of her popularity as a patroness. People liked something substantial when they had paid money for it; and they would look at her—surrounded by her staff in charity ball-rooms, with her high nose and her broad,

square figure, attired in an uniform covered with sequins—as though she were a general.

The only thing against her was that she had not a double name. She was a power in upper-middle class society, with its hundred sets and circles, all intersecting on the common battlefield of charity functions, and on that battlefield brushing skirts so pleasantly with the skirts of Society with the capital "S." She was a power in society with the smaller "s," that larger, more significant, and more powerful body, where the commercially Christian institutions, maxims, and "principle" which Mrs. Baynes embodied, were real life-blood, circulating freely, real business currency, not merely the sterilised imitation that flowed in the veins of smaller Society with the larger "S." People who knew her felt her to be sound—a sound woman, who never gave herself away, nor anything else, if she could possibly help it.

She had been on the worst sort of terms with Bosinney's father, who had not infrequently made her the object of an unpardonable ridicule. She alluded to him now that he was gone as her "poor, dear, irreverend brother."

She greeted June with the careful effusion of which she was a mistress, a little afraid of her as far as a

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woman of her eminence in the commercial and *Christian* world could be afraid—for so slight a girl June had a great dignity, the fearlessness of her eyes gave her that. And Mrs. Baynes, too, shrewdly recognised that behind the uncompromising frankness of June's manner there was much of the Forsyte. If the girl had been merely frank and courageous, Mrs. Baynes would have thought her "crafty," and despised her; if she had been merely a Forsyte, like Francie—let us say—she would have patronised her from sheer weight of metal; but June, small though she was—Mrs. Baynes habitually admired quantity—gave her an uneasy feeling; and she placed her in a chair opposite the light.

There was another reason for her respect—which Mrs. Baynes, too good a churchwoman to be worldly, would have been the last to admit—she often heard her husband describe old Jolyon as extremely well off, and was biassed towards his granddaughter for the soundest of all reasons. To-day she felt the emotion with which we read a novel describing a hero and an inheritance, nervously anxious lest, by some frightful lapse of the novelist, the young man should be left without it at the end.

Her manner was warm; she had never seen so clearly before how distinguished and desirable a girl this was. She asked after old Jolyon's ^{new} health. A wonderful man for his age; so upright, and young looking, and how old was he? Eighty-one! She would never have thought it! They were at the sea! Very nice for them; she supposed June heard from Phil every day? Her light grey eyes became more prominent as she asked this question; but the girl met the glance without flinching.

"No," she said, "he never writes!"

Mrs. Baynes's eyes dropped; they had no intention of doing so, but they did. They recovered immediately.

"Of course not. That's Phil all over—he was always like that!"

"Was he?" said June.

The brevity of the answer caused Mrs. Baynes's bright smile a moment's hesitation; she disguised it by a quick movement, and spreading her skirts afresh, said: "Why, my dear—he's quite the most harum-scarum person; one never pays the slightest attention to what *he* does!"

The conviction came suddenly to June that she was wasting her time, even were she to put a question point-blank, she would never get anything out of this woman.

"Do you see him?" she asked, her face crimsoning.

The perspiration broke out on Mrs. Baynes's forehead beneath the powder.

"Oh, yes! I don't remember when he was here last—indeed, we haven't seen much of him lately. He's so busy with your cousin's house, I'm told it'll be finished directly. We must organise a little dinner to celebrate the event; do come and stay the night with us!"

"Thank you," said June. Again she thought "I'm only wasting my time. This woman will tell me nothing"

She got up to go. A change came over Mrs Baynes. She rose too; her lips twitched, she fidgeted her hands. Something was evidently very wrong, and she did not dare to ask this girl, who stood there, a slim, straight little figure, with her decided face, her set jaw, and resentful eyes. She was not accustomed to be afraid of asking questions—all organisation was based on the asking of questions!

But the issue was so grave that her nerve, normally strong, was fairly shaken. only that morning her husband had said: "Old Mr. Forsyte must be worth well over a hundred thousand pounds!"

'And this girl stood there, holding out her hand—holding out her hand!

The chance might be slipping away—she couldn't tell—the chance of keeping her in the family, and yet she dared not speak.

Her eyes followed June to the door.

It closed.

Then with an exclamation Mrs. Baynes ran forward, wobbling her bulky frame from side to side, and opened it again.

Too late! She heard the front door click, and stood still, an expression of real anger and mortification on her face.

June went along the Square with her bird-like quickness. She detested that woman now—whom in happier days she had been accustomed to think so kind. Was she always to be put off thus, and forced to undergo this torturing suspense?

She would go to Phil himself, and ask him what he

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meant. She had the right to know. She hurried on down Sloane Street till she came to Bosinney's number. Passing the swing-door at the bottom, she ran up the stairs, her heart thumping painfully.

At the top of the third flight she paused for breath, and holding on to the bannisters, stood listening. No sound came from above.

With a very white face she mounted the last flight. She saw the door, with his name on the plate. And the resolution that had brought her so far evaporated.

The full meaning of her conduct came to her. She felt hot all over; the palms of her hands were moist beneath the thin silk covering of her gloves.

She drew back to the stairs, but did not descend. Leaning against the rail she tried to get rid of a feeling of being choked; and she gazed at the door with a sort of dreadful courage. No! she refused to go down. Did it matter what people thought of her? They would never know! No one would help her if she did not help herself! She would go through with it.

Forcing herself, therefore, to leave the support of the wall, she rang the bell. The door did not open, and all her shame and fear suddenly abandoned her; she

rang again and again, as though in spite of its emptiness she could drag some response out of that closed room, some recompense for the shame and fear that visit had cost her. It did not open; she left off ringing, and, sitting down at the top of the stairs, buried her face in her hands.

Presently she stole down, out into the air. She felt as though she had passed through a bad illness, and had no desire now but to get home as quickly as she could. The people she met seemed to know where she had been, what she had been doing; and suddenly—over on the opposite side, going towards his rooms from the direction of Montpellier Square—she saw Bodinney himself.

She made a movement to cross into the traffic. Their eyes met, and he raised his hat. An omnibus passed, obscuring her view; then, from the edge of the pavement, through a gap in the traffic, she saw him walking on.

And June stood motionless, looking after him.

CHAPTER XIII.

PERFECTION OF THE HOUSE.

"ONE" mockturtle, clear; one oxtail; two glasses of port."

In the upper room at French's, where a Forsyte could still get heavy English food, James and his son were sitting down to lunch.

Of all eating-places James liked best to come here; there was something unpretentious, well-flavoured, and filling about it, and though he had been to a certain extent corrupted by the necessity for being fashionable, and the trend of habits keeping pace with an income that *would* increase, he still hankered in quiet City moments after the tasty fleshpots of his earlier days. Here you were served by hairy English waiters in aprons; there was sawdust on the floor, and three round gilt looking-glasses hung just above the line of sight. They had only recently done away with the cubicles,

too, in which you could have your chop, prime chump, with a floumy potato, without seeing your neighbours, like a gentleman

He tucked the top corner of his napkin behind the third button of his waistcoat, a practice he had been obliged to abandon years ago in the West End. He felt that he should relish his soup—the entire morning had been given to winding up the estate of an old friend.

After filling his mouth with household bread, stale, he at once began. "How are you going down to Robin Hill? You going to take Irene? You'd better take her I should think there'll be a lot that'll want seeing to."

Without looking up, Soames answered "She won't go"

"Won't go? What's the meaning of that? She's going to live in the house, isn't she?"

Soames made no reply.

"I don't know what's coming to women nowadays," mumbled James; "I never used to have any trouble with them. She's had too much liberty. She's spoiled——"

Soames lifted his eyes: "I won't have anything said against her," he said unexpectedly.

The silence was only broken now by the supping of James's soup.

The waiter brought the two glasses of port, but Soames stopped him.

"That's not the way to serve port," he said; "take them away, and bring the bottle."

Rousing himself from his reverie over the soup, James took one of his rapid shifting surveys of surrounding facts.

"Your mother's in bed," he said; "you can have the carriage to take you down. I should think Irene'd like the drive. This young Bosunney'll be there, I suppose, to show you over?"

Soames nodded.

"I should like to go and see for myself what sort of a job he's made finishing off," pursued James. "I'll just drive round and pick you both up."

"I am going down by train," replied Soames. "If you like to drive round and see, Irene might go with you, I can't tell."

He signed to the waiter to bring the bill, which James paid.

They parted at St. Paul's, Soames branching

off to the station, James taking his omnibus westwards.

He had secured the corner seat next the conductor, where his long legs made it difficult for anyone to get in, and at all who passed him he looked resentfully, as if they had no business to be using up his air.

He intended to take an opportunity this afternoon of speaking to Irene. A word in time saved nine; and now that she was going to live in the country there was a chance for her to turn over a new leaf! He could see that Soames wouldn't stand very much more of her goings on!

It did not occur to him to define what he meant by her "goings on;" the expression was wide, vague, and suited to a Forsyte. And James had more than his common share of courage after lunch.

On reaching home, he ordered out the barouche, with special instructions that the groom was to go too. He wished to be kind to her, and to give her every chance.

When the door of No. 62 was opened he could distinctly hear her singing, and said so at once, to prevent any chance of being denied entrance.

Yes, Mrs. Soames was in, but the maid did not know if she was seeing people

James, moving with the rapidity that ever astonished the observers of his long figure and absorbed expression, went forthwith into the drawing-room without permitting this to be ascertained. He found Irene seated at the piano with her hands arrested on the keys, evidently listening to the voices in the hall. She greeted him without smiling.

"Your mother-in-law's in bed," he began, hoping at once to enlist her sympathy "I've got the carriage here Now, be a good girl, and put on your hat and come with me for a drive. It'll do you good!"

Irene looked at him as though about to refuse, but, seeming to change her mind, went upstairs, and came down again with her hat on.

"Where are you going to take me?" she asked.

"We'll just go down to Robin Hill," said James, spluttering out his words very quick, "the horses want exercise, and I should like to see what they've been doing down there."

Irene hung back, but again changed her mind, and

went out to the carriage, James brooding over her closely, to make quite sure.

It was not before he had got her more than half-way that he began: "Soames is very fond of you—he won't have anything said against you; why don't you show him more affection?"

Irene flushed, and said in a low voice: "I can't show what I haven't got."

James looked at her sharply; he felt that now he had her in his own carriage, with his own horses and servants, he was really in command of the situation. She could not put him off; nor would she make a scene in public.

"I can't think what you're about," he said. "He's a very good husband!"

Irene's answer was so low as to be almost inaudible among the sounds of traffic. He caught the words: "You are not married to him!"

"What's that got to do with it? He's given you everything you want. He's always ready to take you anywhere, and now he's built you this house in the country. It's not as if you had anything of your own."

"No."

Again James looked at her; he could not make out the expression on her face. She looked almost as if she were going to cry, and yet—

"I'm sure," he muttered hastily, "we've all tried to be kind to you."

Irene's lips quivered; to his dismay James saw a tear steal down her cheek. He felt a choke rise in his own throat.

"We're all fond of you," he said, "if you'd only"—he was going to say, "behave yourself," but changed it to—"if you'd only be more of a wife to him."

Irene did not answer, and James, too, ceased speaking. There was something in her silence which disconcerted him; it was not the silence of obstinacy, rather that of acquiescence in all that he could find to say. And yet he felt as if he had not had the last word. He could not understand this.

He was unable, however, to long keep silence

"I suppose that young Bosinney," he said, "will be getting married to June now?"

Irene's face changed. "I don't know," she said; "you should ask *her*."

"Does she write to you?"

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"No."

"How's that?" said James. "I thought you and she were such great friends."

Irene turned on him. "Again," she said, "you should ask *her*!"

"Well," flustered James, frightened by her look, "it's very odd that I can't get a plain answer to a plain question, but there it is"

He sat ruminating over his rebuff, and burst out at last

"Well, I've warned you. You won't look ahead. Soames he doesn't say much, but I can see he won't stand a great deal more of this sort of thing. You'll have nobody but yourself to blame, and, what's more, you'll get no sympathy from anybody."

Irene bent her head with a little smiling bow. "I am very much obliged to you."

James did not know what on earth to answer

The bright hot morning had changed slowly to a grey, oppressive afternoon; a heavy bank of clouds, with the yellow tinge of coming thunder, had risen in the south, and was creeping up. The branches of the trees drooped motionless across the road without the smallest

stir of foliage. A faint odour of glue from the heated horses clung in the thick air; the coachman and groom, rigid and unbending, exchanged stealthy murmurs on the box, without ever turning their heads.

To James's great relief they reached the house at last; the silence and impenetrability of this woman by his side, whom he had always thought so soft and mild, alarmed him.

The carriage put them down at the door, and they entered.

The hall was cool, and so still that it was like passing into a tomb; a shudder ran down James's spine. He quickly lifted the heavy leather curtains between the columns into the inner court.

He could not restrain an exclamation of approval.

The decoration was really in excellent taste. The dull ruby tiles that extended from the foot of the walls to the verge of a circular clump of tall iris plants, surrounding in turn a sunken basin of white marble filled with water, were obviously of the best quality. He admired extremely the purple leather curtains drawn along one entire side, framing a huge white-tiled stove. The central partitions of the sky-light had been slid back,

and the warm air from outside penetrated into the very heart of the house.

He stood, his hands behind him, his head bent back on his high, narrow shoulders, spying the tracery on the columns and the pattern of the frieze which ran round the ivory-coloured walls under the gallery. Evidently, no pains had been spared. It was quite the house of a gentleman. He went up to the curtains, and, having discovered how they were worked, drew them asunder and disclosed the picture-gallery, ending in a great window taking up the whole end of the room. It had a black oak floor, and its walls, again, were of ivory white. He went on throwing open doors, and peeping in. Everything was in apple-pie order, ready for immediate occupation.

He turned round at last to speak to Irene, and saw her standing over in the garden entrance, with her husband and Bosinney.

Though not remarkable for sensibility, James felt at once that something was wrong. He went up to them, and, vaguely alarmed, ignorant of the nature of the trouble, made an attempt to smoothe things over.

"How are you, Mr. Bosinney?" he said, holding out

his hand. "You've been spending money pretty freely down here, I should say!"

Soames turned his back, and walked away. James looked from Bosinney's frowning face to Irene, and, in his agitation, spoke his thoughts aloud. "Well, I can't tell what's the matter. Nobody tells me anything!" And, making off after his son, he heard Bosinney's short laugh, and his "Well, thank God! You look so——" Most unfortunately he lost the rest.

What had happened? He glanced back. Irene was very close to the architect, and her face not like the face he knew of her. He hastened up to his son.

Soames was pacing the picture-gallery.

"What's the matter?" said James. "What's all this?"

Soames looked at him with his supercilious calm unbroken, but James knew well enough that he was violently angry.

"Our friend," he said, "has exceeded his instructions again, that's all. So much the worse for him this time."

He turned round and walked back towards the door. James followed hurriedly, edging himself in front. He

saw Irene take her finger from before her lips, heard her say something in her ordinary voice, and began to speak before he reached them

"There's a storm coming on. We'd better get home. We can't take you, I suppose, Mr Bosinney? No, I suppose not. Then, good-bye!" He held out his hand Bosinney did not take it, but, turning with a laugh, said:

"Good-bye, Mr Forsyte Don't get caught in the storm!" and walked away.

"Well," began James, "I don't know— —"

But the sight of Irene's face stopped him Taking hold of his daughter-in-law by the elbow, he escorted her towards the carriage He felt certain, quite certain, they had been making some appointment or other . . .

Nothing in this world is more sure to upset a Forsyte than the discovery that something on which he has stipulated to spend a certain sum has cost more. And this is reasonable, for upon the accuracy of his estimates the whole policy of his life is ordered If he cannot rely on definite values of property, his compass is amiss, he is adrift upon bitter waters without a helm.

After writing to Bosinney in the terms that have already been chronicled, Soames had dismissed the cost of the house from his mind. He believed that he had made the matter of the final cost so very plain that the possibility of its being again exceeded had really never entered his head. On hearing from Bosinney that his limit of twelve thousand pounds would be exceeded by something like four hundred, he had grown white with anger. His original estimate of the cost of the house completed had been ten thousand pounds, and he had often blamed himself severely for allowing himself to be led into repeated excesses. Over this last expenditure, however, Bosinney had put himself completely in the wrong. How on earth a fellow could make such an ass of himself Soames could not conceive; but he had done so, and all the rancour and hidden jealousy that had been burning against him for so long was now focussed in rage at this crowning piece of extravagance. The attitude of the confident and friendly husband was gone. To preserve property—his wife—he had assumed it, to preserve property of another kind he lost it now.

“Ah!” he had said to Bosinney when he could

“speak; “and I suppose you’re perfectly contented with yourself. But I may as well tell you that you’ve altogether mistaken your man!”

What he meant by those words he did not quite know at the time, but after dinner he looked up the correspondence between himself and Bosinney to make quite sure. There could be no two opinions about it—the fellow had made himself liable for that extra four hundred, or, at all events, for three hundred and fifty of it, and he would have to make it good.

He was looking at his wife’s face when he came to this conclusion. Seated in her usual seat on the sofa, she was altering the lace on a collar. She had not once spoken to him all the evening.

He went up to the mantelpiece, and contemplating his face in the mirror said: “Your friend the Buccaneer has made a fool of himself; he will have to pay for it!”

She looked at him scornfully, and answered: “I don’t know what you are talking about!”

“You soon will. A mere trifle, quite beneath your contempt—four hundred pounds.”

"Do you mean that you are going ^{to} make him pay that towards this hateful house?"

"I do."

"And you know he's got nothing?"

"Yes."

"Then you ^{are} meaner than I thought you."

Soames turned from the mirror, and unconsciously taking a china cup from the mantelpiece, clasped his hands around it, as though praying. He saw her bosom rise and fall, her eyes darkening with anger, and taking no notice of the taunt, he asked quietly

"Are you carrying on a flirtation with Bosinney?"

"No, I am not!"

Her eyes met his, and he looked away. He neither believed nor disbelieved her, but he knew that he had made a mistake in asking, he never had known, never would know, what she was thinking. The sight of her inscrutable face, the thought of all the hundreds of evenings he had seen her sitting there like that soft and passive, but so unreadable, unknown, enraged him beyond measure.

"I believe you are made of stone," he said, clench-

ing his fingers so hard that he broke the fragile cup. The pieces fell into the grate. And Irene smiled.

"You seem to forget," she said, "that cup is not!"

Soames gripped her arm. "A good heating," he said, "is the only thing that would bring you to your senses," but turning on his heel, he left the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

SOAMES SITS ON THE STAIRS.

SOAMES went upstairs that night with the feeling that he had gone too far. He was prepared to offer excuses for his words.

He turned out the gas still burning in the passage outside their room. Pausing, with his hand on the knob of the door, he tried to shape his apology, for he had no intention of letting her see that he was nervous.

But the door did not open, nor when he pulled it and turned the handle firmly. She must have locked it for some reason, and forgotten.

Entering his dressing-room, where the gas was also light and burning low, he went quickly to the other door. That too was locked. Then he noticed that the camp bed which he occasionally used was prepared, and his sleeping-suit laid out upon it. He put his hand

up to his forehead, and brought it away wet. It dawned on him that he was barred out.

He went back to the door, and rattling the handle stealthily, called: "Unlock the door, do you hear? Unlock the door!"

There was a faint rustling, but no answer.

"Do you hear? Let me in at once—I insist on being let in!"

He could catch the sound of her breathing close to the door, like the breathing of a creature threatened by danger.

There was something terrifying in this inexorable silence, in the impossibility of getting at her. He went back to the other door, and putting his whole weight against it, tried to burst it open. The door was a new one—he had had them renewed himself, in readiness for their coming in after the honeymoon. In a rage he lifted his foot to kick in the panel; the thought of the servants restrained him, and he felt suddenly that he was beaten.

Flinging himself down in the dressing-room, he took up a book.

But instead of the print he seemed to see his wife

—with her yellow hair flowing over her bare shoulders, and her great dark eyes—standing like an animal at bay. And the whole meaning of her act of revolt came to him. She meant it to be for good.

He could not sit still, and went to the door again. He could still hear her, and he called: "Irene! Irene!"

He did not mean to make his voice pathetic. In ominous answer, the faint sounds ceased. He stood with clenched hands, thinking.

Presently he stole round on tiptoe, and running suddenly at the other door, made a supreme effort to break it open. It creaked, but did not yield. He sat down on the stairs and buried his face in his hands.

For a long time he sat there in the dark, the moon through the skylight above laying a pale smear that lengthened slowly towards him down the stairway. He tried to be philosophical.

Since she had locked her doors she had no further claim as a wife, and he would console himself with other women!

It was but a spectral journey he made among such delights—he had no appetite for these exploits. He had never had much, and he had lost the habit. He

felt that he could never recover it. His hunger could only be appeased by his wife, inexorable and frightened, behind these shut doors. No other woman could help him.

This conviction came to him with terrible force out there in the dark.

His philosophy left him, and surly anger took its place. Her conduct was immoral, inexcusable, worthy of any punishment within his power. He desired no one but her, and she refused him!

She must really hate him, then! He had never believed it yet. He did not believe it now. It seemed to him incredible. He felt as though he had lost forever his power of judgment. If she, so soft and yielding as he had always judged her, could take this decided step--what could not happen?

Then he asked himself again if she were carrying on an intrigue with Bosinney. He did not believe that she was; he could not afford to believe such a reason for her conduct--the thought was not to be faced.

It would be unbearable to contemplate the necessity of making his marital relations public property. Short of the most convincing proofs he must still refuse

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to believe, for he did not wish to punish himself. And all the time at heart—he *did* believe.

The moonlight cast a greyish tinge over his figure, hunched against the staircase-wall.

Bosinney was in love with her! He hated the fellow, and would not spare him now. He could and would refuse to pay a penny piece over twelve thousand and fifty pounds—the extreme limit fixed in the correspondence; or rather he would pay, he would pay and sue him for damages. He would go to Jobling and Boulter and put the matter in their hands. He would ruin the impecunious beggar! And suddenly—though what connection between the thoughts?—he reflected that Irene had no money either. They were both beggars. This gave him a strange satisfaction.

The silence was broken by a faint creaking through the wall. She was going to bed at last. Ah! Joy and pleasant dreams! If she threw the door open wide he would not go in now!

But his lips, that were twisted in a bitter smile, twitched; he covered his eyes with his hands. . . .

It was late the following afternoon when Soames

stood in the dining-room window gazing gloomily into the Square.

The sunlight still showered on the plane-trees, and in the breeze their gay broad leaves shone and swung in rhyme to a barrel-organ at the corner. It was playing a waltz, an old waltz that was out of fashion, with a fateful rhythm in the notes; and it went on and on, though nothing indeed but leaves danced to the tune.

The woman did not look too gay, for she was tired; and from the tall houses no one threw her down coppers. She moved the organ on, and three doors off began again.

It was the waltz they had played at Roger's when Irene had danced with Bosinney, and the perfume of the gardenias she had worn came back to Soames, drifted by the malicious music, as it had been drifted to him then, when she passed, her hair glistening, her eyes so soft, drawing Bosinney on and on down an endless ball-room.

The organ woman plied her handle slowly; she had been grinding her tune all day—grinding it in Sloane Street hard by, grinding it perhaps to Bosinney himself.

Soames turned, took a cigarette from the carved

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box, and walked back to the window. 'The tune had mesmerised him, and there came into his view Irene, her sunshade furred, hastening homewards down the Square, in a soft, rose-coloured blouse with drooping sleeves, that he did not know. She stopped before the organ, took out her purse, and gave the woman money.

Soames shrank back and stood where he could see into the hall.

She came in with her latch-key, put down her sunshade, and stood looking at herself in the glass. Her cheeks were flushed as if the sun had burned them; her lips were parted in a smile. She stretched her arms out as though to embrace herself, with a laugh that for all the world was like a sob.

Soames stepped forward.

"Very—pretty!" he said.

But as though shot she spun round, and would have passed him up the stairs. He barred the way.

"Why such a hurry?" he said, and his eyes fastened on a curl of hair fallen loose across her ear.

He hardly recognised her. She seemed on fire, so deep and rich the colour of her cheeks, her eyes, her lips, and of the unusual blouse she wore.

She put up^d her hand and smoothed back the curl. She was breathing fast and deep, as though she had been running, and with every breath perfume seemed to come from her hair, and from her bouy, like perfume from an opening flower.

"I don't like that blouse," he said slowly, "it's a soft, shapeless thing!"

He lifted his finger towards her breast, but she dashed his hand aside.

"Don't touch me!" she cried.

He caught her wrist, she wrenched it away.

"And where may you have been?" he asked

"In heaven—out of this house!" With those words she fled upstairs.

Outside—in thanksgiving—at the very door, the organ-grinder was playing the waltz.

And Soames stood motionless. What prevented him from following her?

Was it that, with the eyes of faith, he saw Bosinney looking down from that high window in Sloane Street, straining his eyes for yet another glimpse of Irene's

vanished figure, cooling his flushed face, dreaming of the moment when she flung herself on his breast—the scent of her still in the air around, and the sound of her laugh that was like a sob.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

MRS. MACANDER'S EVIDENCE.

MANY people, no doubt, including the editor of the "Ultra Vivisectionist," then in the bloom of its first youth, would say that Soames was less than a man not to have removed the locks from his wife's doors, and after beating her soundly resumed wedded happiness.

Brutality is not so deplorably diluted by humaneness as it used to be, yet a sentimental segment of the population may still be relieved to learn that he did none of these things. For active brutality is not popular with Forsytes; they are too circumspect, and, on the whole, too soft-hearted. And in Soames there was some common pride, not sufficient to make him do a really generous action, but enough to prevent his indulging in an extremely mean one, except, perhaps, in very hot blood. Above all this true Forsyte refused to feel him

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self ridiculous. Short of actually beating his wife, he perceived nothing to be done; he therefore accepted the situation without another word.

Throughout the summer and autumn he continued to go to the office, to sort his pictures, and ask his friends to dinner.

He did not leave town; Irene refused to go away. The house at Robin Hill, finished though it was, remained empty and ownerless. Soames had brought a suit against the Buccaneer, in which he claimed from him the sum of three hundred and fifty pounds.

A firm of solicitors, Messrs. Freak and Able, had put in a defence on Bosinney's behalf. Admitting the facts, they raised a point on the correspondence which, divested of legal phraseology, amounted to this: To speak of "a *free* hand in the terms of this correspondence" is an Irish bull.

By a chance, fortuitous but not improbable in the close borough of legal circles, a good deal of information came to Soames's ear anent this line of policy, the working partner in his firm, Bustard, happening to sit next at dinner at Walmisley's, the Taxing Master, to young Chankery, of the Common Law Bar.

The necessity for talking what is known as "shop," which comes on all lawyers with the removal of the ladies, caused Chankery, a young and promising advocate, to propound an impersonal conundrum to his neighbour, whose name he did not know, for, seated as he permanently was in the background, Bustard had practically no name.

He had, said Chankery, a case coming on with a "very nice point." He then explained, preserving every professional discretion, the riddle in Soames's case. Everyone, he said, to whom he had spoken, thought it a nice point. The issue was small unfortunately, "though d——d serious for his client he believed"—Walmisley's champagne was bad but plentiful—A judge would make short work of it, he was afraid. He intended to make a big effort—the point was a nice one. What did his neighbour say?

Bustard, a model of secrecy, said nothing. He related the incident to Soames however with some malice, for this quiet man was capable of human feeling, ending with his own opinion that the point *was* "a very nice one."

In accordance with his resolve, our Forsyte had put

his interests into the hands of Jobling and Boulter. From the moment of doing so he regretted that he had not acted for himself. On receiving a copy of Bosinney's defence he went over to their offices.

Boulter, who had the matter in hand, Jobling having died some years before, told him that in his opinion it was rather a nice point; he would like counsel's opinion on it.

Soames told him to go to a good man, and they went to Waterbuck, Q.C., marking him ten and one, who kept the papers six weeks and then wrote as follows.

"In my opinion the true interpretation of this correspondence depends very much on the intention of the parties, and will turn upon the evidence given at the trial. I am of opinion that an attempt should be made to secure from the architect an admission that he understood he was not to spend at the outside more than twelve thousand and fifty pounds. With regard to the expression, 'a free hand in the terms of this correspondence,' to which my attention is directed, the point is a nice one; but I am of opinion that upon the whole the

ruling in 'Boileau v. The Blasted Cement Co., Ltd.,' will apply."

Upon this opinion they acted, administering interrogatories, but to their annoyance Messrs. Freak and Able answered these in so masterly a fashion that nothing whatever was admitted and that without prejudice.

It was on October 1 that Soames read Waterbuck's opinion, in the dining-room before dinner. It made him nervous; not so much because of the case of "Boileau v. The Blasted Cement Co., Ltd.," as that the point had lately begun to seem to him, too, a nice one, there was about it just that pleasant flavour of subtlety so attractive to the best legal appetites. To have his own impression confirmed by Waterbuck, Q.C., would have disturbed any man.

He sat thinking it over, and staring at the empty grate, for though autumn had come, the weather kept as gloriously fine that year as though it were still high August. It was not pleasant to be disturbed; he desired too passionately to set his foot on Bosinney's neck.

Though he had not seen the architect since the last afternoon at Robin Hill, he was never free from the sense of his presence—never free from the memory of

his worn face with its high cheek-bones and enthusiastic eyes. It would not be too much to say that he had never got rid of the feeling of that night when he heard the peacock's cry at dawn—the feeling that Bosinney haunted the house. And every man's shape that he saw in the dark evenings walking past, seemed that of him whom George had so appropriately named the Buccaneer.

Irene still met him, he was certain, where, or how, he neither knew, nor asked, deterred by a vague and secret dread of too much knowledge. It all seemed subterranean nowadays.

Sometimes when he questioned his wife as to where she had been, which he still made a point of doing, as every Forsyte should, she looked very strange. Her self-possession was wonderful, but there were moments when, behind the mask of her face, inscrutable as it had always been to him, lurked an expression he had never been used to see there.

She had taken to lunching out too; when he asked Bilson if her mistress had been in to lunch, as often as not she would answer: "No, sir."

He strongly disapproved of her gadding about by

herself, and told her so. But she took no notice. There was something that angered, amazed, yet almost amused, him about the calm way in which she disregarded his wishes. It was really as if she were hugging to herself the thought of a triumph over him.

He rose from the perusal of Waterbuck, Q.C.'s opinion, and, going upstairs, entered her room, for she did not lock her doors till bedtime—she had the decency, he found, to save the feelings of the servants. She was brushing her hair, and turned to him with strange fierceness.

"What do you want?" she said. "Please leave my room!"

He answered: "I want to know how long this state of things between us is to last? I have put up with it long enough."

"Will you please leave my room?"

"Will you treat me as your husband?"

"No."

"Then, I shall take steps to make you."

"Do!"

He stared, amazed at the calmness of her answer. Her lips were compressed in a thin line; her hair lay in

fluffy masses on her bare shoulders, in all its strange golden contrast to her dark eyes—those eyes alive with the emotions of fear, hate, contempt, and odd, haunting triumph.

“Now, please, will you leave my room?”

He turned round, and went sulkily out.

He knew very well that he had no intention of taking steps, and he saw that she knew too—knew that he was afraid to.

It was a habit with him to tell her the doings of his day: how such and such clients had called, how he had arranged a mortgage for Parkes, how that long-standing suit of Fryer *v.* Forsyte was getting on, which, arising in the preternaturally careful disposition of his property by his great-uncle Barnabas, who had tied it up so that no one could get at it at all, seemed likely to remain a source of income for several solicitors till the Day of Judgment.

And how he had called in at Jobson's, and seen a Boucher sold, which he had just missed buying of Talleyrand and Sons in Pall Mall.

He had an admiration for Boucher, Watteau, and all that school. It was a habit with him to tell her all

these matters, and he continued to do it even now, talking for long spells at dinner, as though by the volubility of words he could conceal from himself the ache in his heart.

Often, if they were alone, he made an attempt to kiss her when she said good night. He may have had some vague notion that some night she would let him; or perhaps only the feeling that a husband ought to kiss his wife. Even if she hated him, he at all events ought not to put himself in the wrong by neglecting this ancient rite.

And why did she hate him? Even now he could not altogether believe it. It was strange to be hated!—the emotion was too extreme; yet he hated Bosinney, that Buccaneer, that prowling vagabond, that night-wanderer. For in his thoughts Soames always saw him lying in wait—wandering. Ah, but he must be in very low water! Young Burkitt, the architect, had seen him coming out of a third-rate restaurant, looking terribly down in the mouth!

During all the hours he lay awake, thinking over the situation, which seemed to have no end—unless she should suddenly come to her senses—never once did

the thought of separating from his wife seriously enter his head. . . .

And the Forsytes! What part did they play in this stage of Soames's subterranean tragedy?

Truth to say, little or none, for they were at the sea.

From hotels, hydropathics, or lodging-houses, they were bathing daily; laying in a stock of ozone to last them through the winter.

Each section, in the vineyard of its own choosing, grew and culled and pressed and bottled the grapes of a pet sea-air.

The end of September began to witness their several returns.

In rude health and small omnibuses, with considerable colour in their cheeks, they arrived daily from the various termini. The following morning saw them back at their vocations.

On the next Sunday Timothy's was thronged from lunch till dinner.

Amongst other gossip, too numerous and interesting to relate, Mrs. Septimus Small mentioned that Soames and Irene had not been away.

It remained for a comparative outsider to supply the next evidence of interest.

It chanced that one afternoon late in September, Mrs. MacAnder, Winifred Dartie's greatest friend, taking a constitutional, with young Augustus Flippard, on her bicycle in Richmond Park, passed Irene and Bosinney walking from the bracken towards the Sheen Gate.

Perhaps the poor little woman was thirsty, for she had ridden long on a hard, dry road, and, as all London knows, to ride a bicycle and talk to young Flippard will try the toughest constitution; or perhaps the sight of the cool bracken grove, whence "those two" were coming down, excited her envy. The cool bracken grove on the top of the hill, with the oak boughs for roof, where the pigeons were raising an endless wedding hymn, and the autumn, humming, whispered to the ears of lovers in the fern, while the deer stole by. The bracken grove of irretrievable delights, of golden minutes in the long marriage of heaven and earth! The bracken grove, sacred to stags, to strange tree-stump fauns leaping around the silver whiteness of a birch-tree nymph at summer dusk!

This lady knew all the Forsytes, and having been at

June's "at home," was not at a loss to see with whom she had to deal. Her own marriage, poor thing, had not been successful, but having had the good sense and ability to force her husband into pronounced error, she herself had passed through the necessary divorce proceedings without incurring censure.

She was therefore a judge of all that sort of thing, and lived in one of those large buildings, where in small sets of apartments, are gathered incredible quantities of Forsytes, whose chief recreation out of business hours is the discussion of each others' affairs.

Poor little woman, perhaps she was thirsty, certainly she was bored, for Flippard was a wit. To see "those two" in so unlikely a spot was quite a merciful "pick-me-up."

At the MacAnder, like all London, Time pauses.

This small but remarkable woman merits attention; her all-seeing eye and shrewd tongue were inscrutably the means of furthering the ends of Providence.

With an air of being in at the death, she had an almost distressing power of taking care of herself. She had done more, perhaps, in her way than any woman about town to destroy the sense of chivalry which still

clogs the wheel of civilisation. So smart she was, and spoken of endearingly as "the little Mac Ander!"

Dressing tightly and well, she belonged to a Woman's Club, but was by no means the neurotic and dismal type of member who was always thinking of her rights. She took her rights unconsciously, they came natural to her, and she knew exactly how to make the most of them without exciting anything but admiration amongst that great class to whom she was affiliated, not precisely perhaps by manner, but by birth, breeding, and the true, the secret gauge, a sense of property.

The daughter of a Bedfordshire solicitor, by the daughter of a clergyman, she had never, through all the painful experience of being married to a very mild painter with a cranky love of Nature, who had deserted her for an actress, lost touch with the requirements, beliefs, and inner feeling of Society, and, on attaining her liberty, she placed herself without effort in the very thick of Forsyteism.

Always in good spirits, and "full of information," she was universally welcomed. She excited neither surprise nor disapprobation when encountered on the Rhine or at Zermatt, either alone, or travelling with a

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lady and two gentlemen; it was felt that she was perfectly capable of taking care of herself; and the hearts of all Forsytes warmed to that wonderful instinct, which enabled her to enjoy everything without giving anything away. It was generally felt that to such women as Mrs. MacAnder should we look for the perpetuation and increase of our best type of woman. She had never had any children

If there was one thing more than another that she could not stand it was one of those soft women with what men called "charm" about them, and for Mrs. Soames she always had an especial dislike.

Obscurely, no doubt, she felt that if charm were once admitted as the criterion, smartness and capability must go to the wall; and she hated—with a hatred the deeper that at times this so-called charm seemed to disturb all calculations—the subtle seductiveness which she could not altogether overlook in Irene.

She said, however, that she could see nothing in the woman—there was no "go" about her—she would never be able to stand up for herself—anyone could take advantage of her, that was plain—she could not see in fact what men found to admire!

She was not really ill-natured, but, in maintaining her position after the trying circumstances of her married life, she had found it so necessary to be "full of information," that the idea of holding her tongue about "those two" in the Park never occurred to her.

And it so happened that she was dining that very evening at Timothy's, where she went sometimes to "cheer the old things up," as she was wont to put it. The same people were always asked to meet her: Winifred Dartie and her husband; Francie, because she belonged to the artistic circles, for Mrs MacAnder was known to contribute articles on dress to "The Ladies' Kingdom Come," and for her to flirt with, provided they could be obtained, two of the Hayman boys, who, though they never said anything, were believed to be fast and thoroughly intimate with all that was latest in smart Society.

At twenty-five minutes past seven she turned out the electric light in her little hall, and wrapped in her opera cloak with the chuchilla collar, came out into the corridor, pausing a moment to make sure she had her latch-key. These little self-contained flats were convenient; to be sure, she had no light and no air, but

she could shut it up whenever she liked* and go away. There was no bother with servants, and she never felt tied as she used to when poor, dear Fred was always about, in his mooney way. She retained no rancour against poor dear Fred, he was such a fool, but the thought of that actress drew from her, even now, a little, bitter, denisive smile

Firmly snapping the door to, she crossed the corridor, with its gloomy, yellow-ochre walls, and its infinite vista of brown, numbered doors. The lift was going down, and wrapped for the ears in the high cloak, with every one of her auburn hairs in its place, she waited motionless for it to stop at her floor. The iron gates clanked open, she entered. There were already three occupants, a man in a great white waistcoat, with a large, smooth face like a baby's, and two old ladies in black, with mittened hands

Mrs MacAnder smiled at them; she knew everybody, and all these three, who had been admirably silent before, began to talk at once. This was Mrs MacAnder's successful secret. She provoked conversation.

Throughout a descent of five storeys the conversation

continued, the lift boy standing with his back turned, his cynical face protruding through the bars.

At the bottom they separated, the man in the white waistcoat sentimentally to the billiard room, the old ladies to dine and say to each other "A dear little woman!" "Such a rattle!" and Mrs MacAnder to her cab.

When Mrs. MacAnder dined at Timothy's, the conversation (although Timothy himself could never be induced to be present) took that wider, man-of-the-world tone current among Forsytes at large, and this, no doubt, was what put her at a premium there

Mrs Small and Aunt Hester found it an exhilarating change "If only," they said, "Timothy would meet her!" It was felt that she would do him good. She could tell you, for instance, the latest story of Sir Charles Fiste's son at Monte Carlo, who was the real heroine of Tynemouth Eddy's fashionable novel that everyone was holding up their hands over, and what they were doing in Paris about wearing bloomers. She was so sensible, too, knowing all about that vexed question, whether to send young Nicholas's eldest into the navy as his mother wished, or make him an accountant as his

father thought would be safer. She strongly deprecated the navy. If you were not exceptionally brilliant or exceptionally well connected, they passed you over so disgracefully, and what was it after all to look forward to, even if you became an admiral—a pittance! An accountant had many more chances, but let him ~~be~~^{be} put with a good firm, where there was no risk at starting!

Sometimes she would give them a tip on the Stock Exchange; not that Mrs Small or Aunt Hester ever took it. They had indeed no money to invest, but it seemed to bring them into such exciting touch with the realities of life. It was an event. They would ask Timothy, they said. But they never did, knowing in advance that it would upset him. Surreptitiously, however, for weeks after they would look in that paper, which they took with respect on account of its really fashionable proclivities, to see whether "Bright's Rubies" or "The Woollen Mackintosh Company" were up or down. Sometimes they could not find the name of the company at all; and they would wait until James or Roger or even Swithun came in, and ask them in voices trembling with curiosity how that "Bolivia Lume and

Spelträte" was doing—they could not find it in the paper.

And Roger would answer: "What do you want to know for? Some trash! You'll go burning your fingers—investing your money in lime, and things you know nothing about! Who told you?" and ascertaining what they had been told, he would go away, and, making inquiries in the City, would perhaps invest some of his own money in the concern.

It was about the middle of dinner, just in fact as the saddle of mutton had been brought in by Smither, that Mrs. MacAnder, looking airily round, said: "Oh! and whom do you think I passed to-day in Richmond Park? You'll never guess—Mrs. Soames and—Mr. Bosinney. They must have been down to look at the house!"

Winifred Dartie coughed, and no one said a word. It was the piece of evidence they had all unconsciously been waiting for.

To do Mrs. McAnder justice, she had been to Switzerland and the Italian lakes with a party of three, and had not heard of Soames's rupture with his

architect. She could not tell, therefore, the profound impression her words would make.

Upright and a little flushed, she moved her small, shrewd eyes from face to face, trying to gauge the effect of her words. On either side of her a Hayman boy, his lean, taciturn, hungry face turned towards his plate, ate his mutton steadily.

These two, Giles and Jesse, were so alike and so inseparable that they were known as the Dromios. They never talked, and seemed always completely occupied in doing nothing. It was popularly supposed that they were cramming for an important examination. They walked without hats for long hours in the Gardens attached to their house, books in their hands, a fox-terrier at their heels, never saying a word, and smoking all the time. Every morning, about fifty yards apart, they trotted down Campden Hill on two lean hacks, with legs as long as their own, and every morning about an hour later, still fifty yards apart, they cantered up again. Every evening, wherever they had dined, they might be observed about half-past ten, leaning over the balustrade of the Alhambra promenade.

They were never seen otherwise than together; in

this way passing their lives, apparently perfectly content.

Inspired by some dumb stirring within them of the feelings of gentlemen, they turned at this painful moment to Mrs MacAnder, and said in precisely the same voice. "Have you seen the——?"

Such was her surprise at being thus addressed that she put down her fork, and Smithei, who was passing, promptly removed her plate. Mrs. MacAnder, however, with presence in mind, said instantly "I must have a little more of that nice mutton."

But afterwards in the drawing-room she sat down by Mrs Small, determined to get to the bottom of the matter. And she began.

"What a charming woman, Mrs Soames, such a sympathetic temperament! Soames is a really lucky man!"

Her anxiety for information had not made sufficient allowance for that inner Forsyte skin which refuses to share its troubles with outsiders, Mrs. Septimus Small, drawing herself up with a creak and rustle of her whole person, said, shivering in her dignity:

"My dear, it is a subject we do not talk about!"

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CHAPTER II. NIGHT IN THE PARK.

ALTHOUGH with her infallible instinct Mrs. Small had said the very thing to make her guest "*more intrigüée than ever*," it is difficult to see how else she could truthfully have spoken.

It was not a subject which the Forsytes could talk about even among themselves—to use the word Soames had invented to characterise to himself the situation, it was "subterranean."

Yet, within a week of Mrs McAnder's encounter in Richmond Park, to all of them—save Timothy, from whom it was carefully kept—to James on his domestic beat from the Poultry to Park Lane, to George the wild one, on his daily adventure from the bow window at the Haversnake to the billiard-room at the "Red Pottle," was it known that "those two" had gone to extremes.

George (it was he who invented many of those striking expressions still current in fashionable circles) voiced the sentiment more accurately than anyone when he said to his brother Eustace that "the Buccaneer" was "going it;" he expected Soames was about "fed up."

It was felt that he must be, and yet, what could he done? He ought perhaps to take steps, but to take steps would be deplorable.

Without an open scandal which they could not see their way to recommending, it was difficult to see what steps could be taken. In this *impasse*, the only thing was to say nothing to Soames, and nothing to each other; in fact, to pass it over.

By displaying towards Irene a dignified coldness, some impression might be made upon her, but she was seldom now to be seen, and there seemed a slight difficulty in seeking her out on purpose to show her coldness. Sometimes in the privacy of his bedroom James would reveal to Emily the real suffering that his son's misfortune caused him.

"I can't tell," he would say; "it worries me out of my life. There'll be a scandal, and that'll do him no

good. I sha'n't say anything to him. 'There might be nothing in it. What do you think? She's very artistic, they tell me. What? Oh, you're a 'regular 'Juley!' Well, I don't know, I expect the worst. This is what comes of having no children. I knew how it would be from the first. They never told me they didn't mean to have any children—nobody tells me anything!"

On his knees by the side of the bed, his eyes open and fixed with worry, he would breathe into the counterpane. Clad in his nightshirt, his neck poked forward, his back rounded, he resembled some long white bird.

"Our Father——" he repeated, turning over and over again the thought of this possible scandal.

Like old Jolyon, he, too, at the bottom of his heart set the blame of the tragedy down to family interference. What business had that lot—he began to think of the Stanhope Gate branch, including young Jolyon and his daughter, as "that lot"—to introduce a person like this Bosmney into the family? (He had heard George's soubriquet, "The Buccaneer," but he could make nothing of that—the young man was an architect.)

He began to feel that his brother Jolyon, to whom

he had^d always looked up and on whose opinion he had relied, was not quite what he had expected.

Not having his eldest brother's force of character he was more sad than angry. His great comfort was to go to Winifred's, and take the little Darties in his carriage over to Kensington Gardens, and there, by the Round Pond, he could often be seen walking with his eyes fixed anxiously on little Publius Dartie's sailing-boat, which he had himself freighted with a penny, as though convinced that it would never again come to shore, while little Publius—who James delighted to say was not a bit like his father—skipping along under his lee, would try to get him to bet another that it never would, having found that it always did. And James would make the bet, he always paid—sometimes as many as three or four pennies in the afternoon, for the game seemed never to pall on little Publius--and always in paying he said. "Now, that's for your money-box. Why, you're getting quite a rich man!" The thought of his little grandson's growing wealth was a real pleasure to him. But little Publius knew a sweet-shop, and a truck worth two of that.

And they would walk home across the Park, James's

figure, with high shoulders and absorbed and worried face, exercising its tall, lean protectorship, pathetically unregarded, over the robust child-figures of Imogen and little Publius.

But those Gardens and that Park were not sacred to James. Forsytes and tramps, children and lovers, rested and wandered day after day, night after night, seeking one and all some freedom from labour, from the reek and turmoil of the streets.

The leaves browned slowly, lingering with the sun and summer-like warmth of the nights.

On Saturday, October 5, the sky that had been blue all day deepened after sunset to the bloom of purple grapes. There was no moon, and a clear dark, like some velvety garment, was wrapped around the trees, whose thinned branches, resembling plumes, stirred not in the still, warm air. All London had poured into the Park, draining the cup of summer to its dregs.

Couple after couple, from every gate, they streamed along the paths and over the burnt grass, and one after another, silently out of the lighted spaces, stole into the shelter of the feathery trees, where, blotted against some trunk, or under the shadow of shrubs, they were

lost to all but themselves in the heart of the soft darkness.

To fresh-comers along the paths, these forerunners formed but part of that passionate dusk, whence only a strange murmur, like the confused beating of hearts, came forth. But when that murmur reached each couple in the lamplight, their voices wavered, and ceased, then arms enlaced, their eyes began seeking, searching, probing the blackness. Suddenly, as though drawn by invisible hands, they, too, stepped over the railing, and, silent as shadows, were gone from the light.

The stillness, enclosed in the far, inexorable roar of the town, was alive with the myriad passions, hopes, and loves of multitudes of struggling human atoms; for in spite of the disapproval of that great body of Forsytes, the Municipal Council—to whom Love had long been considered, next to the Sewage Question, the gravest danger to the community—a process was going on that night in the Park, and in a hundred other parks, without which the thousand factories, churches, shops, taxes, and drains, of which they are custodians, were as arteries without blood, a man without a heart.

The instincts of self-forgetfulness, of passion, and of

love, hiding under the trees, away from the trustees of their remorseless enemy, the "sense of property," were holding a stealthy revel, and Soames, returning from Bayswater—for he had been alone to dine at Timothy's—walking home along the water, with his mind upon that coming lawsuit, had the blood driven from his heart by a low laugh and the sound of kisses. He thought of writing to the *Times* the next morning, to draw the attention of the Editor to the condition of our parks. He did not, however, for he had a horror of seeing his name in print.

But starved as he was, the whispered sounds in the stillness, the half-seen forms in the dark, acted on him like some morbid stimulant. He left the path along the water and stole under the trees, along the deep shadow of little plantations, where the boughs of chestnut trees hung their great leaves low, and there was blacker refuge, shaping his course in circles that had for their object a stealthy inspection of chairs side by side against tree-trunks, of enlaced lovers, who stirred at his approach.

Now he stood still on the rise overlooking the Serpentine, where, in full lamplight, black against the silver

water, sat a couple who never moved, the woman's face buried on the man's neck—a single form, like a carved emblem of passion, silent and unashamed

And, stung by the sight, Soames hurried on deeper into the shadow of the trees.

In this search, who knows what he thought and what he sought? Bread for hunger—light in darkness? Who knows what he expected to find—impersonal knowledge of the human heart—the end of his private subterranean tragedy—for, again, who knew, but that each dark couple, unnamed, unnameable, might not be he and she?

But it could not be such knowledge as this that he was seeking—the wife of Soames Forsyte sitting in the Park like a common wench! Such thoughts were inconceivable, and from tree to tree, with his noiseless step, he passed.

Once he was sworn at; once the whisper, "If only it could always be like this!" sent the blood flying again from his heart, and he waited there, patient and dogged, for the two to move. But it was only a poor thin slip of a shop-girl in her draggled blouse that passed him, clinging to her lover's arm.

A hundred other lovers too whispered that hope in the stillness of the trees, a hundred other lovers cling to each other.

But shaking himself with sudden disgust, Soames returned to the path, and left that seeking for he knew not what. •

CHAPTER III.

MEETING AT THE BOTANICAL.

YOUNG JOLYON, whose circumstances were not those of a Forsyte, found at times a difficulty in sparing the money needful for those country jaunts and researches into Nature, without having prosecuted which no water colour artist ever puts brush to paper.

He was frequently, in fact, obliged to take his colour-box into the Botanical Gardens, and there, on his stool, in the shade of a monkey-puzzler or in the lee of some india-rubber plant, he would spend long hours sketching.

An Art critic who had recently been looking at his work had delivered himself as follows.

"In a way your drawings are very good; tone and colour, in some of them certainly quite a feeling for Nature. But, you see, they're so scattered; you'll never get the public to look at them. Now, if you'd taken a

definite subject, such as 'London by Night,' or 'The Crystal Palace in the Spring,' and made a regular series, the public would have known at once what they were looking at. I can't lay too much stress upon that. All the men who are making great names in Art, like Crum Stone or Bleeder, are making them by avoiding the unexpected; by specialising and putting their works all in the same pigeon-hole, so that the public know at once where to go. And this stands to reason, for if a man's a collector he doesn't want people to smell at the canvas to find out whom his pictures are by; he wants them to be able to say at once, 'A capital Forsyte!' It is all the more important for you to be careful to choose a subject that they can lay hold of on the spot, since there's no very marked originality in your style."

Young Jolyon, standing by the little piano, where a bowl of dried rose-leaves, the only produce of the garden, was deposited on a bit of faded damask, listened with his dum smile.

Turning to his wife, who was looking at the speaker with an angry expression on her thin face, he said:

"You see, dear?"

"I do *not*," she answered in her staccato voice, that still had a little foreign accent; "your style *has* originality."

The critic looked at her, smiled deferentially, and said no more. Like everyone else, he knew their history.

The words bore good fruit with young Jolyon, they were contrary to all that he believed in, to all that he theoretically held good in his Art, but some strange, deep instinct moved him against his will to turn them to profit

He discovered therefore one morning that an idea had come to him for making a series of water-colour drawings of London. How the idea had arisen he could not tell, and it was not till the following year, when he had completed and sold them at a very fair price, that in one of his impersonal moods, he found himself able to recollect the Art critic, and to discover in his own achievement another proof that he was a Forsyte.

He decided to commence with the Botanical Gardens, where he had already made so many studies, and chose the little artificial pond, sprinkled now with an

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autumn shower of red and yellow leaves, for though the gardeners longed to sweep them off, they could not reach them with their brooms. The rest of the gardens they swept bare enough, removing every morning Nature's rain of leaves; piling them in heaps, whence from slow fires rose the sweet, acrid smoke that, like the cuckoo's note for spring, the scent of lime-trees for the summer, is the true emblem of the fall. The gardeners' tidy souls could not abide the gold and green and russet pattern on the grass. The gravel paths must lie unstained, ordered, methodical, without knowledge of the realities of life, nor of that slow and beautiful decay that flings crowns underfoot to star the earth with fallen glories, whence, as the cycle rolls, will leap again wild spring.

Thus each leaf that fell was marked from the moment when it fluttered a good-bye and dropped, slow turning, from its twig

But on that little pond the leaves floated in peace, and praised heaven with their hues, the sunlight haunting over them.

And so young Jolyon found them.

Coming there one morning in the middle of October,

he was disconcerted to find a bench about twenty paces from his stand occupied, for he had a proper horror of anyone seeing him at work.

A lady in a velvet jacket was sitting there, with her eyes fixed on the ground. A flowering laurel, however, stood between, and, taking shelter behind this, young Jolyon prepared his easel.

His preparations were leisurely, he caught, as every true artist should, at anything that might delay for a moment the effort of his work, and he found himself looking furtively at this unknown dame

Like his father before him, he had an eye for a face. This face was charming!

He saw a rounded chin nestling in a cream ruffle, a delicate face with large dark eyes and soft lips. A black "picture" hat concealed the hair, her figure was lightly poised against the back of the bench, her knees were crossed, the tip of a patent leather shoe emerged beneath her skirt. There was something, indeed, inexpressibly dainty about the person of this lady, but young Jolyon's attention was chiefly riveted by the look on her face, which reminded him of his wife. It was as though its owner had come into contact with forces

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too strong for her. It troubled him, arousing vague feelings of attraction and chivalry. Who was she? And what doing there, alone?

Two young gentlemen of that peculiar breed, at once forward and shy, found in the Regent's Park, came by on their way to lawn-tennis, and he noted with disapproval their furtive stares of admiration. A loitering gardener halted to do something unnecessary to a clump of pampas grass; he, too, wanted an excuse for peeping. A gentleman, old, and, by his hat, a professor of horticulture, passed three times to scrutinise her long and stealthily, a queer expression about his lips.

With all these men young Jolyon felt the same vague irritation. She looked at none of them, yet was he certain that every man who passed would look at her like that.

Her face was not the face of a sorceress, who in every look holds out to men the offer of pleasure, it had none of the "devil's beauty" so highly prized among the first Forsytes of the land, neither was it of that type, no less adorable, associated with the box of chocolate; it was not of the spiritually passionate, or passionately spiritual order, peculiar to house-decoration

and modern poetry, nor did it seem to promise to the playwright material for the production of the interesting and neurasthenic figure, who commits suicide in the last act.

In shape and colouring, in its soft persuasive passivity, its sensuous purity, this woman's face reminded him of Titian's "Heavenly Love," a reproduction of which hung over the sideboard in his dining-room. And her attraction seemed to be in this soft passivity, in the feeling she gave that to pressure she must yield.

For what or whom was she waiting, in the silence, with the trees dropping here and there a leaf, and the thrushes strutting close on grass touched with the sparkle of the autumn rime?

Then her charming face grew eager, and, glancing round, with almost a lover's jealousy, young Jolyon saw Bosinney striding across the grass.

Curiously he watched the meeting, the look in their eyes, the long clasp of their hands. They sat down close together, linked for all their outward discretion. He heard the rapid murmur of their talk; but what they said he could not catch.

He had rowed in the galley himself! He knew the

long hours of waiting and the lean minutes of a half-public meeting, the tortures of suspense that haunt the unhallowed lover.

It required, however, but a glance at their two faces to see that this was none of those affairs of a season that distract men and women about town, none of those sudden appetites that wake up ravening, and are surfeited and asleep again in six weeks. This was the real thing! This was what had happened to himself! Out of this anything might come!

Bosinney was pleading, and she so quiet, so soft, yet immovable in her passivity, sat looking over the grass.

Was he the man to carry her off, that tender, passive being, who would never stir a step for herself? Who had given him all herself, and would die for him, but perhaps would never run away with him!

It seemed to young Jolyon that he could hear her saying: "But, darling, it would ruin you!" For he himself had experienced to the full the gnawing fear at the bottom of each woman's heart that she is a drag on the man she loves.

And he peeped at them no more, but their soft,

rapid talk came to his ears, with the stuttering song of some bird that seemed trying to remember the notes of spring: Joy—tragedy? Which—which?

And gradually their talk ceased, long silence followed.

“And where does Soames come in?” young Jolyon thought. “People think she is concerned about the sin of deceiving her husband! Little they know of women! She’s eating, after starvation—taking her revenge! And Heaven help her—for he’ll take his.”

He heard the swish of silk, and, spying round the laurel, saw them walking away, their hands stealthily joined.

At the end of July old Jolyon had taken his granddaughter to the mountains; and on that visit (the last they ever paid) June recovered to a great extent her health and spirits. In the hotels, filled with British Forsytes—for old Jolyon could not bear a “set of Germans,” as he called all foreigners—she was looked upon with respect—the only granddaughter of that fine-looking, and evidently wealthy, old Mr Forsyte. She did not mix freely with people—to mix freely with people was not June’s habit—but she formed some friendships, and

notably one in the Rhone Valley, with a French girl who was dying of consumption.

Determining at once that her friend should not die, she forgot, in the institution of a campaign against Death, much of her own trouble.

Old Jolyon watched the new intimacy with relief and disapproval; for this additional proof that her life was to be passed amongst "lame ducks" worried him. Would she never make a friendship or take an interest in something that would be of real benefit to her?

"Taking up with a parcel of foreigners," he called it. He often, however, brought home grapes or roses, and presented them to this "Mam'zelle" with an ingratiating twinkle.

Towards the end of September, in spite of June's disapproval, Mademoiselle Vigot breathed her last in the little hotel at St. Luc, to which they had moved her, and June took her defeat so deeply to heart that old Jolyon carried her away to Paris. Here, in contemplation of the "Venus de Milo" and the "Madeleine," she shook off her depression, and when, towards the

middle of October, they returned to town, her grandfather believed that he had effected a cure.

No sooner, however, had they established themselves in Stanhope Gate than he perceived to his dismay a return of her old absorbed and brooding manner. She would sit, staring in front of her, her chin on her hand, like a little Norse spirit, grim and intent, while all around in the electric light, then just installed, shone the great drawing-room brocaded up to the frieze, full of furniture from Baple and Pullbred's. And in the huge gilt mirror were reflected those Dresden china groups of young men in tight knee breeches, at the feet of full-bosomed ladies nursing on their laps pet lambs, which old Jolyon had bought when he was a bachelor and thought so highly of in these days of degenerate taste. He was a man of most open mind, who, more than any Forsyte of them all had moved with the times, but he could never forget that he had bought these groups at Jobson's, and given a lot of money for them. He often said to June, with a sort of disillusioned contempt:

"*You* don't care about them! They're not the gimcrack things you and your friends like, but they cost

me seventy pounds!" He was not a man who allowed his taste to be warped when he knew for solid reasons that it was sound.

One of the first things that June did on getting home was to go round to Timothy's. She persuaded herself that it was her duty to call there, and cheer him with an account of all her travels, but in reality she went because she knew of no other place where, by some random speech, or roundabout question, she could glean news of Bosinney.

They received her most cordially. And how was her dear grandfather? He had not been to see them since May. Her Uncle Timothy was very poorly, he had had a lot of trouble with the chimney-sweep in his bedroom; the stupid man had let the soot down the chimney! It had quite upset her uncle.

June sat there a long time, dreading, yet passionately hoping, that they would speak of Bosinney.

But paralysed by unaccountable discretion, Mrs. Septimus Small let fall no word, neither did she question June about him. In desperation the girl asked at last whether Soames and Irene were in town—she had not yet been to see anyone.

It was Aunt Hester who replied: Oh, yes, they were in town, they had ~~not~~ been away at all. There was some little difficulty about the house, she believed. June had heard, no doubt! She had better ask her Aunt Juley!

June turned to Mrs Small, who sat upright in her chair, her hands clasped, her face covered with innumerable pouts. In answer to the girl's look she maintained a strange silence, and when she spoke it was to ask June whether she had worn night-socks up in those high hotels where it must be so cold of a night.

June answered that she had not, she hated the stuffy things, and rose to leave.

Mrs. Small's infallibly chosen silence was far more ominous to her than anything that could have been said.

Before half an hour was over she had dragged the truth from Mrs Baynes in Lowndes Square, that Soames was bringing an action against Bosinney ~~over~~ the decoration of the house.

Instead of disturbing her, the news had a strangely calming effect, as though she saw in the prospect of

this struggle new hope for herself. She learnt that the case was expected to come on in about a month, and there seemed little or no prospect of Bosinney's success.

"And whatever he'll do I can't think," said Mrs. Baynes; "it's very dreadful for him, you know—he's got no money—he's very hard up. And we can't help him, I'm sure. I'm told the money lenders won't lend if you have no security, and he has none—none at all."

Her embonpoint had increased of late; she was in the full swing of autumn organisation, her writing-table literally strewn with the menus of charity functions. She looked meaningly at June, with her round eyes of parrot-grey.

The sudden flush that rose on the girl's intent young face—she must have seen spring up before her a great hope—the sudden sweetness of her smile, often came back to Lady Baynes in after years (Baynes was knighted when he built that public Museum of Art which has given so much employment to officials, and so little pleasure to those working classes for whom it was designed).

The memory of that change, vivid and touching, like the breaking open of a flower, or the first sun after

long winter, the memory, too, of all that came after, often intruded itself, unaccountably, inopportunately on Lady Baynes, when her mind was set upon the most important things.

This was the very afternoon of the day that young Jolyon witnessed the meeting in the Botanical Gardens, and on this day, too, old Jolyon paid a visit to his solicitors, Forsyte, Bustard, and Forsyte, in the Poultry. Soames was not in, he had gone down to Somerset House; Bustard was buried up to the hilt in papers and that inaccessible apartment, where he was judiciously placed, in order that he might do as much work as possible, but James was in the front office, biting a finger, and lugubriously turning over the pleadings in *Forsyte v. Bosinney*.

This sound lawyer had only a sort of luxurious dread of the "nice point," enough to set up a pleasurable feeling of fuss; for his good practical sense told him that if he himself were on the Bench he would not pay much attention to it. But he was afraid that this Bosinney would go bankrupt and Soames would have to find the money after all, and costs into the bargain. And behind his tangible dread there was always that

intangible trouble, lurking in the background, intricate, dim, scandalous, like a bad dream, and of which this action was but an outward and visible sign.

He raised his head as old Jolyon came in, and muttered: "How are you, Jolyon? Haven't seen you for an age. You've been to Switzerland, they tell me. This young Bosinney, he's got himself into a mess. I knew how it would be!" He held out the papers, regarding his elder brother with nervous gloom.

Old Jolyon read them in silence, and while he read them James looked at the floor, biting his fingers the while.

Old Jolyon pitched them down at last, and they fell with a thump amongst a mass of affidavits in "*re* Buncombe, deceased," one of the many branches of that parent and profitable tree, "*Fryer v. Foisyte*"

"I don't know what Soames is about," he said, "to make a fuss over a few hundred pounds. I thought he was a man of property"

James's long upper lip twitched angrily, he could not bear his son to be attacked in such a spot.

"It's not the money——" he began, but meeting his brother's glance, direct, shrewd, judicial, he stopped.

There was a silence

"I've come in for my Will," said old Jolyon at last, tugging at his moustache.

James's curiosity was roused at once. Perhaps nothing in this life was more stimulating to him than a Will; it was the supreme deal with property, the final inventory of a man's belongings, the last word on what he was worth. He sounded the bell.

"Bring in Mr Jolyon's Will," he said to an anxious, dark-haired clerk.

"You going to make some alterations?" And through his mind there flashed the thought. "Now, am I worth as much as he?"

Old Jolyon put the Will in his breast pocket, and James twisted his long legs regretfully.

"You've made some nice purchases lately, they tell me," he said.

"I don't know where you get your information from," answered old Jolyon sharply. "When's this action coming on? Next month? I can't tell what you've got in your minds. You must manage your own affairs, but if you take my advice, you'll settle it

out of Court. Good-bye!" With a cold handshake he was gone.

James, his fixed grey-blue eye corkscrewing round some secret anxious image, began again to bite his finger.

Old Jolyon took his Will to the offices of the New Colliery Company, and sat down in the empty Board Room to read it through. He answered "Down-by-the-starn" Hemmings so tartly when the latter, seeing his Chairman seated there, entered with the new Superintendent's first report, that the Secretary withdrew with regretful dignity, and sending for the transfer clerk, blew him up till the poor youth knew not where to look.

It was not—by George—as he (Down-by-the-starn) would have him know, for a whipper-snapper of a young fellow like him, to come down to that office, and think that he was God Almighty. He (Down-by-the-starn) had been head of that office for more years than a boy like him could count, and if he thought that when he had finished all his work, he could sit there doing nothing, he did not know ~~him~~ Hemmings (Down-by-the-starn), and so forth.

On the other side of the green baize door old Jolyon sat at the long, mahogany-and-leather board table, his thick, loose-jointed, gold-rimmed eye-glasses perched on the bridge of his nose, his gold pencil moving down the clauses of his Will.

It was a simple affair, for there were none of those vexatious little legacies and donations to charities, which fritter away a man's possessions, and damage the majestic effect of that little paragraph in the morning papers accorded to Forsytes who die with a hundred thousand pounds.

A simple affair. Just a bequest to his son of twenty thousand, and "as to the residue of my property of whatsoever kind whether realty or personalty or partaking of the nature of either—upon trust to pay the proceeds rents annual produce dividends or interest thereof and thereon to my said granddaughter June Forsyte or her assigns during her life to be for her sole use and benefit and without, etc. . and from and after her death or decease upon trust to convey assign transfer or make over the said last-mentioned lands hereditaments premises trust monies stocks funds investments and securities or such as shall then stand for and re-

present the same unto such person or persons whether one or more for such intents purposes and uses and generally in such manner way and form in all respects as the said June Forsyte notwithstanding coverture shall by her last Will and Testament or any writing or writings in the nature of a Will testament or testamentary disposition to be by her duly made signed and published direct appoint or make over give and dispose of the same. And in default etc. . . . Provided always . . ." and so on, in seven folios of brief and simple phraseology.

The will had been drawn by James in his palmy days. He had foreseen almost every contingency.

Old Jolyon sat a long time reading this Will, at last he took half a sheet of paper from the rack, and made a prolonged pencil note, then buttoning up the Will, he caused a cab to be called and drove to the offices of Paramor and Herring, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Jack Herring was dead, but his nephew was still in the firm, and old Jolyon was closeted with him for half an hour.

He had kept the hansom, and on coming out, gave the driver the address—3, Wistaria Avenue.

He felt a strange, slow satisfaction, as though he had scored a victory over James and the man of property. They should not poke their noses into his affairs any more; he had just cancelled their trusteeships of his Will, he would take the whole of his business out of their hands, and put it into the hands of young Herring, and he would move the business of his Companies too. If that young Soames were such a man of property, he would never miss a thousand a year or so, and under his great white moustache old Jolyon grimly smiled. He felt that what he was doing was in the nature of retributive justice, richly deserved.

Slowly, surely, with the secret inner process that works the destruction of an old tree, the poison of the wounds to his happiness, his will, his pride, had corroded the comely edifice of his philosophy. Life had worn him down on one side, till, like that family of which he was the head, he had lost balance.

To him, borne northwards towards his son's house, the thought of the new disposition of property, which he had just set in motion, appeared vaguely in the light of a stroke of punishment, levelled at that family and that Society, of which James and his son seemed to him the

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representatives. He had made a restitution to young Jolyon, and restitution to young Jolyon satisfied his secret craving for revenge—revenge against Time, sorrow, and interference, against all that incalculable sum of disapproval that had been bestowed by the world for fifteen years on his only son. It presented itself as the one possible way of asserting once more the domination of his will; of forcing James, and Soames, and the family, and all those hidden masses of Forsytes—a great stream rolling against the single dam of his obstinacy—to recognise once and for all that *he would be master*. It was sweet to think that at last he was going to make the boy a richer man by far than that son of James, that “man of property.” And it was sweet to give to Jo, for he loved his son.

Neither young Jolyon nor his wife were in (young Jolyon indeed was not back from the Botanical), but the little maid told him that she expected the master at any moment:

“He’s always at ’ome to tea, sir, to play with the children.”

Old Jolyon said he would wait; and sat down patiently enough in the faded, shabby drawing-room,

where, now that the summer chintzes were removed, the old chairs and sofas revealed all their threadbare deficiencies. He longed to send for the children; to have them there beside him, their supple bodies against his knees; to hear Jolly's: "Hallo, Gran!" and see his rush; and feel Holly's soft little hand stealing up against his cheek. But he would not. There was solemnity in what he had come to do, and until it was over he would not play. He amused himself by thinking how with two strokes of his pen he was going to restore the look of caste so conspicuously absent from everything in that little house, how he could fill these rooms, or others in some larger mansion, with triumphs of art from Baple and Pullbred's, how he could send little Jolly to Harrow and Oxford (he no longer had faith in Eton and Cambridge, for his son had been there); how he could procure little Holly the best musical instruction, the child had a remarkable aptitude.

As these visions crowded before him, causing emotion to swell his heart, he rose, and stood at the window, looking down into the little walled strip of garden, where the pear-tree, bare of leaves before its time, stood with gaunt branches in the slow gathering mist

of the autumn afternoon. The dog Balthasar, his tail curled tightly over a piebald, furry back, was walking at the further end, sniffing at the plants, and at intervals placing his leg for support against the wall.

And old Jolyon mused.

What pleasure was there left but to give? It was pleasant to give, when you could find one who would be thankful for what you gave—one of your own flesh and blood! There was no such satisfaction to be had out of giving to those who did not belong to you, to those who had no claim on you! Such giving as that was a betrayal of the individualistic convictions and actions of his life, of all his enterprise, his labour, and his moderation, of the great and proud fact that, like tens of thousands of Forsytes before him, tens of thousands in the present, tens of thousands in the future, he had always made his own, and held his own, in the world.

And, while he stood there looking down on the smut-covered foliage of the laurels, the black-stained grass-plot, the progress of the dog Balthasar, all the suffering of the fifteen years that he had been baulked

of legitimate enjoyment mingled its gall with the sweetness of the approaching moment.

Young Jolyon came at last, pleased with his work, and fresh from long hours in the open air. On hearing that his father was in the drawing-room, he inquired hurriedly whether Mrs. Forsyte was at home, and being informed that she was not, heaved a sigh of relief. Then putting his painting materials carefully in the little coat-closet out of sight, he went in.

With characteristic decision old Jolyon came at once to the point. "I've been altering my arrangements, Jo," he said. "You can cut your coat a bit longer in the future—I'm settling a thousand a year on you at once. June will have fifty thousand at my death, and you the rest. That dog of yours is spoiling the garden. I shouldn't keep a dog, if I were you!"

The dog Balthasar, seated in the centre of the lawn, was examining his tail.

Young Jolyon looked at the animal, but saw him dimly, for his eyes were misty.

"It won't come far short of a hundred thousand, my boy," said old Jolyon; "I thought you'd better know. I haven't much longer to live at my age. I

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sha'n't allude to it again. How's your wife? and—give her my love."

Young Jolyon put his hand on his father's shoulder, and, as neither spoke, the episode closed.

Having seen his father into a hansom, young Jolyon came back to the drawing-room and stood, where old Jolyon had stood, looking down on the little garden. He tried to realise all that this meant to him, and, Forsyte that he was, vistas of property were opened out in his brain; the years of half rations through which he had passed had not sapped his natural instincts. In extremely practical form, he thought of travel, of his wife's costume, the children's education, a pony for Jolly, a thousand things; but in the midst of all he thought, too, of Bosinney and his mistress, and the broken song of the thrush. Joy—tragedy! Which? Which?

The old past—the poignant, suffering, passionate, wonderful past, that no money could buy, that nothing could restore in all its burning sweetness—had come back before him.

When his wife came in he went straight up to her and took her in his arms; and for a long time he stood

without speaking, his eyes closed, pressing her to him, while she looked at him with a wondering, adoring, doubting look in her eyes.

CHAPTER IV

VOYAGE INTO THE INFERNO.

THE morning after a certain night on which Soames at last asserted his rights and acted like a man, he breakfasted alone.

He breakfasted by gaslight, the fog of late November wrapping the town as in some monstrous blanket till the trees of the Square even were barely visible from the dining-room window.

He ate steadily, but at times a sensation as though he could not swallow attacked him. Had he been right to yield to his overmastering hunger of the night before, and break down the resistance which he had suffered now too long from this woman who was his lawful and solemnly constituted helpmate?

He was strangely haunted by the recollection of her face, from before which, to soothe her, he had tried to pull her hands—of her terrible smothered sobbing,



the like of which he had never heard, and still seemed to hear; and he was still haunted by the odd, intolerable feeling of remorse and shame he had felt as he stood looking at her by the flame of the single candle, before silently slinking away.

And somehow, now that he had acted like this, he was surprised at himself.

Two nights before, at Winifred Daitie's, he had taken Mrs. MacAnder in to dinner. She had said to him, looking in his face with her sharp, greenish eyes. "And so your wife is a great friend of that Mr Bosinney's?"

Not deigning to ask what she meant, he had brooded over her words.

They had roused in him a fierce jealousy, which, with the peculiar perversion of this instinct, had turned to fiercer desire.

Without the incentive of Mrs. MacAnder's words he might never have done what he had done. Without their incentive and the accident of finding his wife's door for once unlocked, which had enabled him to steal upon her asleep.

Slumber had removed his doubts, but the morning

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brought them again. One thought comforted him: No one would know—it was not the sort of thing that she would speak about.

And, indeed, when the vehicle of his daily business life, that needed so imperatively the grease of clear and practical thought, started rolling once more with the reading of his letters, those nightmare-like doubts began to assume less extravagant importance at the back of his mind. The incident was really not of great moment; women made a fuss about it in books; but in the cool judgment of right-thinking men, of men of the world, of such as he recollected often received praise in the Divorce Court, he had but done his best to sustain the sanctity of marriage, to prevent her from abandoning her duty, possibly, if she were still seeing Bosinney, from——. No, he did not regret it.

Now that the first step towards reconciliation had been taken, the rest would be comparatively—comparatively——

He rose and walked to the window. His nerve had been shaken. The sound of smothered sobbing was in his ears again. He could not get rid of it.

He put on his fur-coat, and went out into the fog;

having to go into the City, he took the underground railway from Sloane Square station

In his corner of the first-class compartment filled with City men the smothered sobbing still haunted him, so he opened the *Times* with the rich crackle that drowns all lesser sounds, and, barricaded behind it, set himself steadily to con the news.

He read that a Recorder had charged a grand jury on the previous day with a more than usually long list of offences. He read of three murders, five man-slaughters, seven arsons, and as many as eleven—a surprisingly high number—rapes, in addition to many less conspicuous crimes, to be tried during a coming Sessions; and from one piece of news he went on to another, keeping the paper well before his face.

And still, inseparable from his reading, was the memory of Irene's tear-stained face, and the sounds from her broken heart.

The day was a busy one, including, in addition to the ordinary affairs of his practice, a visit to his brokers, Messrs. Grin and Grinning, to give them instructions to sell his shares in the New Colliery Co., Ltd., whose business he suspected, rather than knew, was stagnating

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(this enterprise afterwards slowly declined, and was ultimately sold for a song to an American syndicate); and a long conference at Waterbuck, Q.C.'s chambers, attended by Boulter, by Fiske, the junior counsel, and Waterbuck, Q.C., himself.

The case of *Forsythe v. Bosinney* was expected to be reached on the morrow, before Mr. Justice Bentham.

Mr. Justice Bentham, a man of commonsense rather than too great legal knowledge, was considered to be about the best man they could have to try the action. He was a "strong" judge.

Waterbuck, Q.C., in pleasing conjunction with an almost rude neglect of Boulter and Fiske, paid to Soames a good deal of attention, by instinct or the sounder evidence of rumour, feeling him to be a man of property.

He held with remarkable consistency to the opinion he had already expressed in writing, that the issue would depend to a great extent on the evidence given at the trial, and in a few well-directed remarks he advised Soames not to be too careful in giving that evidence. "A little bluffness, Mr. Forsythe," he said, "a little bluffness," and after he had spoken he laughed

firmly, closed his lips tight, and scratched his head just below where he had pushed his wig back, for all the world like the gentleman-farmer for whom he loved to be taken. He was considered perhaps the leading man in breach of promise cases.

Soames used the underground again in going home.

The fog was worse than ever at Sloane Square station. Through the still, thick blurr, men groped in and out; women, very few, grasped their reticules to their bosoms and handkerchiefs to their mouths; crowned with the wend excrescence of the driver, haloed by a vague glow of lamplight that seemed to drown in vapour before it reached the pavement, cabs loomed dim-shaped ever and again, and discharged citizens bolting like rabbits to their burrows.

And these shadowy figures, wrapped each in his own little shroud of fog, took no notice of each other. In the great warren, each rabbit for himself, especially those clothed in the more expensive fur, who, afraid of carriages on foggy days, are driven underground.

One figure, however, not far from Soames, waited at the station door.

Some buccaneer or lover, of whom each Forsyte

thought: "Poor devil! looks as if he were having a bad time!" Their kind hearts beat a stroke faster for that poor, waiting, anxious lover in the fog; but they hurried by, well knowing that they had neither time nor money to spare for any suffering but their own.

Only a policeman, patrolling slowly and at intervals, took an interest in that waiting figure, the brim of whose slouch hat half hid a face reddened by the cold, all thin, and haggard, over which a hand stole now and again to smoothe away anxiety, or renew the resolution that kept him waiting there. But the waiting lover (if over he were) was used to policemen's scrutiny, or too absorbed in his anxiety, for he never flinched. A hardened case, accustomed to long trysts, to anxiety, and fog, and cold, if only his mistress came at last. Foolish lover! Fogs last until the spring, there is also snow and rain, no comfort anywhere, gnawing fear if you bring her out, gnawing fear if you bid her stay at home!

. "Serve him right; he should arrange his affairs better!"

So any respectable Forsyte. Yet, if that sounder citizen could have listened at the waiting lover's heart,

out there in the fog and the cold, he would have said again. "Yes, poor devil! he's having a bad time!"

Soames got into his cab, and, with the glass down, crept along Sloane Street, and so along the Brompton Road, and home. He reached his house at five.

His wife was not in. She had gone out a quarter of an hour before. Out at such a time of night, into this terrible fog! What was the meaning of that?

He sat by the dining-room fire, with the door open, disturbed to the soul, trying to read the evening paper. A book was no good—in daily papers alone was any narcotic to such worry as his. From the customary events recorded in the journal he drew some comfort. "Suicide of an actress"—"Grave indisposition of a Statesman" (that chronic sufferer)—"Divorce of an army officer"—"Fire in a colliery"—he read them all. They helped him a little—prescribed by the greatest of all doctors, our natural taste.

It was nearly seven when he heard her come in.

The incident of the night before had long lost its importance under stress of anxiety at her strange sortie into the fog. But now that Irene was home, the memory

of her broken-hearted sobbing came back to him, and he felt nervous at the thought of facing her.

She was already on the stairs; her grey fur coat hung to her knees, its high collar almost hid her face, she wore a thick veil.

She neither turned to look at him nor spoke. No ghost or stranger could have passed more silently.

Bilson came to lay dinner, and told him that Mrs. Forsyte was not coming down; she was having the soup in her room.

For once Soames did not "change;" it was, perhaps, the first time in his life that he had sat down to dinner with soiled cuffs, and, not even noticing them, he brooded long over his wine. He sent Bilson to light a fire in his picture-room, and presently went up there himself.

Turning on the gas, he heaved a deep sigh, as though amongst these treasures, the backs of which confronted him in stacks, around the little room, he had found at length his peace of mind. He went straight up to the greatest treasure of them all, an undoubted Turner, and, carrying it to the easel, turned its face to the light. There had been a movement in Turners,

but he had not been able to make up his mind to part with it. He stood for a long time, his pale, clean-shaven face poked forward above his stand-up collar, looking at the picture as though he were adding it up; a wistful expression came into his eyes; he found, perhaps, that it came to too little. He took it down from the easel to put it back against the wall; but, in crossing the room, stopped, for he seemed to hear sobbing.

It was nothing—only the sort of thing that had been bothering him in the morning. And soon after, putting the high guard before the blazing fire, he stole downstairs.

Fresh for the morrow! was his thought. It was long before he went to sleep. . . .

It is now to George Forsyte that the mind must turn for light on the events of that fog-engulfed afternoon.

The wittiest and most sportsmanlike of the Forsytes had passed the day reading a novel in the paternal mansion at Princes' Gardens. Since a recent crisis in his financial affairs he had been kept on parole by Roger, and compelled to reside "at home."

Towards five o'clock he went out, and took train at

South Kensington Station (for everyone to-day went Underground). His intention was to dine, and pass the evening playing billiards at the Red Pottle—that unique hostel, neither club, hotel, nor good gilt restaurant.

He got out at Charing Cross, choosing it in preference to his more usual St. James's Park, that he might reach Jermyn Street by better lighted ways.

On the platform his eyes—for in combination with a composed and fashionable appearance, George had sharp eyes, and was always on the look-out for fillips to his sardonic humour—his eyes were attracted by a man, who, leaping from a first-class compartment, staggered rather than walked towards the exit.

“So ho, my bird!” said George to himself; “why, it's ‘the Buccaneer!’” and he put his big figure on the trail. Nothing afforded him greater amusement than a drunken man.

Bosinney, who wore a slouch hat, stopped in front of him, spun round, and rushed back towards the carriage he had just left. He was too late. A porter caught him by the coat; the train was already moving on.

George's practised glance caught sight of the face

of a lady clad in a grey fur coat at the carriage window. It was Mrs. Soames—and George felt that this was interesting!

And now he followed Bosinney more closely than ever—up the stairs, past the ticket-collector into the street. In that progress, however, his feelings underwent a change; no longer merely curious and amused, he felt sorry for the poor fellow he was shadowing. "The Buccaneer" was not drunk, but seemed to be acting under the stress of violent emotion; he was talking to himself, and all that George could catch were the words "Oh, God!" Nor did he appear to know what he was doing, or where going, but stared, hesitated, moved like a man out of his mind; and from being merely a joker in search of amusement, George felt that he must see the poor chap through.

He had "taken the knock"—"taken the knock!" And he wondered what on earth Mrs. Soames had been saying, what on earth she had been telling him in the railway carriage. She had looked bad enough herself! It made George sorry to think of her travelling on with her trouble all alone.

He followed close behind Bosinney's elbow—a tall,

burly figure, saying nothing, dodging warily—and shadowed him out into the fog. There was something here beyond a jest. He kept his head admirably, in spite of some excitement, for in addition to compassion, the instincts of the chase were roused within him.

Bosinney walked right out into the thorough vast muffled blackness, where a man could not see his paces before him; where, all around, voices or whistles mocked the sense of direction; and sudden shapes came rolling slow upon them; and now and then a light showed like a dim island in an infinite dark sea.

And fast into this perilous gulf of night walked Bosinney, and fast after him walked George. If the fellow meant to put his "twopenny" under a bus, he would stop it if he could! Across the street and back the hunted creature strode, not groping as other men were groping in that gloom, but driven forward as though the faithful George behind wielded a knout; and this chase after a haunted man began to have for George the strangest fascination.

But it was now that the affair developed in a way which ever afterwards caused it to remain green in his mind. Brought to a stand-still in the fog, he heard

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words which threw a sudden light on these proceedings. What Mrs. Soames had said to Bosinney in the train was now no longer dark. George understood from those mutterings that Soames had exercised his power over an estranged and unwilling wife in the greatest—the supreme act of property.

His fancy wandered in the fields of this situation; it impressed him; he guessed something of the anguish, the sexual confusion and horror in Bosinney's heart. And he thought: "Yes, it's a bit thick! I don't wonder the poor fellow is half-cracked!"

He had run his quarry to earth on a bench under one of the lions in Trafalgar Square, a monster sphynx ~~many~~ like themselves in that gulf of darkness. Here, rigid and silent, sat Bosinney, and George, in whose patience was a touch of strange brotherliness, took his stand behind. He was not lacking in a certain delicacy—a sense of form—that did not permit him to intrude upon this tragedy, and he waited, quiet as the lion above, his ~~fur~~ collar hitched above his ears concealing the fleshy ~~redness~~ of his cheeks, concealing all but his eyes with their sardonic, compassionate stare. And men kept passing back from business on the way to their

clubs—men whose figures shrouded in cocoons of fog came into view like spectres, and like spectres vanished. Then even in his compassion George's Quilpish humour broke forth in a sudden longing to pluck these spectres by the sleeve, and say:

"Hi, you Johnnies! You don't often see a show like this! Here's a poor devil whose mistress has just been telling him a pretty little story of her husband; walk up, walk up! He's taken the knock, you see."

In fancy he saw them gaping round the tortured lover; and grinned as he thought of some respectable, newly-married spectre enabled by the state of his own affections to catch an inkling of what was going on within Bosinney; he fancied he could see his mouth getting wider and wider, and the fog going down and down. For in George was all that contempt of the middle-class—especially of the married middle-class—peculiar to the wild and sportsmanlike spirits in its ranks.

But he began to be bored. Waiting was not what he had bargained for.

"After all," he thought, "the poor chap will get over it; not the first time such a thing has happened in this

little city!" But now his quarry again began muttering words of violent hate and anger. And following a sudden impulse George touched him on the shoulder.

Bosinney spun round.

"Who are you? What do you want?"

George could have stood it well enough in the light of the gas lamps, in the light of that everyday world of which he was so hardy a connoisseur; but in this fog, where all was gloomy and unreal, where nothing had that matter-of-fact value associated by Forsytes with earth, he was a victim to strange qualms, and as he tried to stare back into the eyes of this maniac, he thought:

"If I see a bobby, I'll hand him over; he's not fit to be at large."

But waiting for no answer, Bosinney strode off into the fog, and George followed, keeping perhaps a little farther off, yet more than ever set on tracking him down.

"He can't go on long like this," he thought. "It's God's own miracle he's not been run over already." He brooded no more on policemen, a sportsman's sacred fire alive again within him.

Into a denser gloom than ever Bosinney held on at

a furious pace; but his pursuer perceived more method in his madness—he was clearly making his way westwards.

“He’s really going for Soames!” thought George. The idea was attractive. It would be a sporting end to such a chase. He had always disliked his cousin.

The shaft of a passing cab brushed against his shoulder and made him leap aside. He did not intend to be killed for the Buccaneer, or anyone. Yet, with hereditary tenacity, he stuck to the trail through vapour that blotted out everything but the shadow of the hunted man and the dim moon of the nearest lamp.

Then suddenly, with the instinct of a town-stroller, George knew himself to be in Piccadilly. Here he could find his way blindfold; and freed from the strain of geographical uncertainty, his mind returned to Bosinney’s trouble.

Down the long avenue of his man-about-town experience, bursting, as it were, through a smirch of doubtful amours, there stalked to him a memory of his youth. A memory, poignant still, that brought the scent of hay, the gleam of moonlight, a summer magic, into the reek and blackness of this London fog—the memory of a

night when in the darkest shadow of a lawn he had overheard from a woman's lips that he was not her sole possessor. And for a moment George walked no longer in black Piccadilly, but lay again, with hell in his heart, and his face to the sweet-smelling, dewy grass, in the long shadow of poplars that hid the moon.

A longing seized him to throw his arm round the Buccaneer, and say, "Come, old boy. Time cures all. Let's go and drink it off!"

But a voice yelled at him, and he started back. A cab rolled out of blackness, and into blackness disappeared. And suddenly George perceived that he had lost Bosinney. He ran forward and back, felt his heart clutched by a sickening fear, the dark fear that lives in the wings of the fog. Perspiration started out on his brow. He stood quite still, listening with all his might.

"And then," as he confided to Dartie the same evening in the course of a game of billiards at the Red Pottle, "I lost him."

Dartie twirled complacently at his dark moustache. He had just put together a neat break of twenty-three, failing at a "jenny." "And who was *she*?" he asked.

George looked slowly at the "man of the world's"

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fattish, sallow face, and a little grim smile lurked about the curves of his cheeks and his heavy-lidded eyes.

"No, no, my fine fellow," he thought. "I'm not going to tell *you*." For though he mixed with Dartie a good deal, he thought him a bit of a cad.

"Oh, some little love-lady or other," he said, and chalked his cue.

"A love-lady!" exclaimed Dartie—he used a more figurative expression. "I made sure it was our friend Soa——"

"Did you?" said George, curtly. "Then, damme, you've made an error!"

He missed his shot. He was careful not to allude to the subject again till, towards eleven o'clock, having, in his poetic phraseology, "looked upon the drink when it was yellow," he drew aside the blind, and gazed out into the street. The murky blackness of the fog was but faintly broken by the lamps of the Red Pottle, and no shape of mortal man or thing was in sight.

"I can't help thinking of that poor Buccaneer," he said. "He may be wandering out there now in that fog. If he's not a corpse," he added with strange dejection.

"Corpse!" said Dartie, in whom the recollection of

his defeat at Richmond flared up. "*He's* all right. Ten to one if he wasn't tight!"

George turned on him, looking really formidable, with a sort of savage gloom on his big face.

"Dry up!" he said. "Don't I tell you he's 'taken the knock!'"

CHAPTER V.

THE TRIAL.

ON the morning of his case, which was second in the list, Soames was again obliged to start without seeing Irene, and it was just as well, for he had not as yet made up his mind what attitude to adopt towards her.

He had been requested to be in court by half-past ten, to provide against the event of the first action (a breach of promise) collapsing, which however it did not, both sides showing a courage that afforded Waterbuck, Q.C., an opportunity for improving his already great reputation in this class of case. He was opposed by Ram, the other celebrated breach of promise man. It was a battle of giants.

The Court delivered judgment just before the luncheon interval. The jury left the box for good, and Soames went out to get something to eat. He met James standing at the little luncheon-bar, like a pelican in the wilderness of the galleries, bent over a sandwich with a glass of sherry before him. The spacious emptiness of the great central hall, over which father and son brooded as they stood together, was marred now and then for a fleeting moment by barristers in wig and gown hurriedly bolting across by an occasional old lady or rusty-coated man, looking up in a frightened way, and by two persons, bolder than their generation, seated in an embrasure arguing. The sound of their voices arose, together with a scent as of neglected wells, which, mingling with the odour of the galleries, combined to form the savour, like nothing but the emanation of a refined cheese, so indissolubly connected with the administration of British justice.

It was not long before James addressed his son.

"When's your case coming on? I suppose it'll be on directly. I shouldn't wonder if this Bosinney'd say anything; I should think he'd have to. He'll go bankrupt if it goes against him." He took a large bite at his

sandwich and a mouthful of sherry. "Your mother," he said, "wants you and Irene to come and dine to-night."

A chill smile played round Soames's lips; he looked back at his father. Anyone who had seen the look, cold and furtive, thus interchanged, might have been pardoned for not appreciating the real understanding between them. James finished his sherry at a draught.

"How much?" he asked.

On returning to the court Soames took at once his rightful seat on the front bench beside his solicitor. He ascertained where his father was seated with a glance so sidelong as to commit nobody.

James, sitting back with his hands clasped over the handle of his umbrella, was brooding on the end of the bench immediately behind counsel, whence he could get away at once when the case was over. He considered Bosinney's conduct in every way outrageous, but he did not wish to run up against him, feeling that the meeting would be awkward.

Next to the Divorce Court, this court was, perhaps, the favourite emporium of justice, libel, breach of promise, and other commercial actions being frequently decided

there. Quite a sprinkling of persons unconnected with the law occupied the back benches, and the hat of a woman or two could be seen in the gallery.

The two rows of seats immediately in front of James were gradually filled by barristers in wigs, who sat down to make pencil notes, chat, and attend to their teeth; but his interest was soon diverted from these lesser lights of justice by the entrance of Waterbuck, Q.C., with the wings of his silk gown rustling, and his red, capable face supported by two short, brown whiskers. The famous Q.C. looked, as James freely admitted, the very picture of a man who could heckle a witness.

For all his experience, it so happened that he had never seen Waterbuck, Q.C., before, and, like many Forsytes in the lower branch of the profession, he had an extreme admiration for a good cross-examiner. The long, lugubrious folds in his cheeks relaxed somewhat after seeing him, especially as he now perceived that Soames alone was represented by silk.

Waterbuck, Q.C., had barely screwed round on his elbow to chat with his Junior before Mr. Justice Benthams himself appeared—a thin, rather hen-like man, with a little stoop, clean-shaven under his snowy wig. Like all

the rest of the court, Waterbuck rose, and remained on his feet until the judge was seated. James rose but slightly; he was already comfortable, and had no opinion of Bentham, having sat next but one to him at dinner twice at the Bumley Tomms'. Bumley Tomms was rather a poor thing, though he had been so successful. James himself had given him his first brief. He was excited, too, for he had just found out that Bosinney was not in court

"Now, what's he mean by that?" he kept on thinking.

The case having been called on, Waterbuck, Q C., pushing back his papers, hitched his gown on his shoulder, and, with a semi-circular look around him, like a man who is going to bat, arose and addressed the court.

The facts, he said, were not in dispute, and all that his lordship would be asked was to interpret the correspondence which had taken place between his client and the defendant, an architect, with reference to the decoration of a house. He would, however, submit that this correspondence could only mean one very plain thing. After briefly reciting the history of the house at

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Robin Hill, which he described as a mansion, and the actual facts of expenditure, he went on as follows:

"My client, Mr. Soames Forsyte, is a gentleman, a man of property, who would be the last to dispute any legitimate claim that might be made against him, but he has met with such treatment from his architect in the matter of this house, over which he has, as your lordship has heard, already spent some twelve—some twelve thousand pounds, a sum considerably in advance of the amount he had originally contemplated, that as a matter of principle—and this I cannot too strongly emphasise—as a matter of principle, and in the interests of others, he has felt himself compelled to bring this action. The point put forward in defence by the architect I will suggest to your lordship is not worthy of a moment's serious consideration." He then read the correspondence.

His client, "a man of recognised position," was prepared to go into the box, and to swear that he never did authorise, that it was never in his mind to authorise, the expenditure of any money beyond the extreme limit of twelve thousand and fifty pounds, which he had clearly fixed; and not further to waste the time of the court, he would at once call Mr. Forsyte.

Soames then went into the box. His whole appearance was striking in its composure. His face, just supercilious enough, pale and clean-shaven, with a little line between the eyes, and compressed lips; his dress in unostentatious order, one hand neatly gloved, the other bare. He answered the questions put to him in a somewhat low, but distinct voice. His evidence under cross-examination savoured of taciturnity.

"Had he not used the expression, 'a free hand?'"

"No."

"Come, come!"

The expression he had used was "a free hand in the terms of this correspondence"

"Would he tell the court that that was English?"

"Yes!"

"What did he say it meant?"

"What it said!"

"Was he prepared to deny that it was a contradiction in terms?"

"Yes."

"He was not an Irishman?"

"No."

"Was he a well-educated man?"

"Yes!"

"And yet he persisted in that statement?"

"Yes."

Throughout this and much more cross-examination, which turned again and again around the "nice point," James sat with his hand behind his ear, his eyes fixed upon his son.

He was proud of him! He could not but feel that in similar circumstances he himself would have been tempted to enlarge his replies, but his instinct told him that this taciturnity was the very thing. He sighed with relief, however, when Soames, slowly turning, and without any change of expression, descended from the box.

When it came to the turn of Bosinney's Counsel to address the Judge, James redoubled his attention, and he searched the Court again and again to see if Bosinney were not somewhere concealed.

Young Chankery began nervously, he was placed by Bosinney's absence in an awkward position. He therefore did his best to turn that absence to account.

He could not but fear—he said—that his client had met with an accident. He had fully expected him there to give evidence; they had sent round that morning

both to Mr. Bosinney's office and to his rooms (though he knew they were one and the same, he thought it was as well not to say so), but it was not known where he was, and this he considered to be ominous, knowing how anxious Mr. Bosinney had been to give his evidence. He had not, however, been instructed to apply for an adjournment, and in default of such instruction he conceived it his duty to go on. The plea on which he somewhat confidently relied, and which his client, had he not unfortunately been prevented in some way from attending, would have supported by his evidence, was that such an expression as a "free hand" could not be limited, fettered, and rendered unmeaning, by any verbiage which might follow it. He would go further and say that the correspondence showed that whatever he might have said in his evidence, Mr. Forsyte had in fact never contemplated repudiating liability on any of the work ordered or executed by his architect. The defendant had certainly never contemplated such a contingency, or, as was demonstrated by his letters, he would never have proceeded with the work—a work of extreme delicacy, carried out with great care and efficiency, to meet and satisfy the fastidious taste of a

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connoisseur, a rich man, a man of property. He felt strongly on this point, and feeling strongly he used, perhaps, rather strong words when he said that this action was of a most unjustifiable, unexpected, indeed unprecedented character. If his Lordship had had the opportunity that he himself had made it his duty to take, to go over this very fine house and see the great delicacy and beauty of the decorations executed by his client—an artist in his most honourable profession—he felt convinced that not for one moment would his Lordship tolerate this, he would use no stronger word than, daring attempt to evade legitimate responsibility.

Taking the text of Soames's letters, he lightly touched on "*Boileau v. The Blasted Cement Company, Limited.*" "It is doubtful," he said, "what that authority has decided; in any case I would submit that it is just as much in my favour as in my friend's." He then argued the "nice point" closely. With all due deference he submitted that Mr. Forsyte's expression nullified itself. His client not being a rich man, the matter was a serious one for him; he was a very talented architect, whose professional reputation was undoubtedly somewhat at stake. He concluded with a perhaps too per-

sonal appeal to the Judge, as a lover of the arts, to show himself the protector of artists, from what was occasionally—he said occasionally—the too iron hand of capital. “What,” he said, “will be the position of the artistic professions, if men of property like this Mr. Forsyte refuse, and are allowed to refuse to carry out the obligations of the commissions which they have given.” . . . He would now call his client, in case he should at the last moment have found himself able to be present.

The name Philip Baynes Bosinney was called three times by the Ushers, and the sound of the calling echoed with strange melancholy throughout the Court and Galleries.

The crying of this name, to which no answer was returned, had upon James a curious effect: it was like calling for your lost dog about the streets. And the creepy feeling that it gave him, of a man missing, grated on his sense of comfort and security—on his cosiness. Though he could not have said why, it made him feel uneasy.

He looked now at the clock—a quarter to three! It would be all over in a quarter of an hour. Where could the young fellow be?

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It was only when Mr Justice Bentham delivered judgment that he got over the turn he had received.

Behind the wooden plateau by which he was fenced from more ordinary mortals the learned Judge leaned forward. The electric light, just turned on above his head, fell on his face, and mellowed it to an orange hue beneath the snowy crown of his wig, the amplitude of his robes grew before the eye; his whole figure, facing the comparative dusk of the court, radiated like some majestic and sacred body. He cleared his throat, took a sip of water, broke the nib of a quill against the desk, and, folding his bony hands before him, began.

To James he suddenly loomed much larger than he had ever thought Bentham would loom. It was the majesty of the law, and a person endowed with a nature far less matter-of-fact than that of James might have been excused for failing to pierce this halo, and disinter therefrom the somewhat ordinary Forsyte, who walked and talked in everyday life under the name of Sir Walter Bentham.

He delivered judgment in the following words:

"The facts in this case are not in dispute. On

May 15 last the defendant wrote to the plaintiff, requesting to be allowed to withdraw from his professional position in regard to the decoration of the plaintiff's house, unless he were given 'a free hand.' The plaintiff, on May 17, wrote back as follows 'In giving you, in accordance with your request, this free hand, I wish you to clearly understand that the total cost of the house as handed over to me completely decorated, inclusive of your fee (as arranged between us) must not exceed twelve thousand pounds' To this letter the defendant replied on May 18 'If you think that in such a delicate matter as decoration I can bind myself to the exact pound, I am afraid you are mistaken.' On May 19 the plaintiff wrote as follows. 'I did not mean to say that if you should exceed the sum named in my letter to you by ten or twenty or even fifty pounds there would be any difficulty between us. You have a free hand in the terms of this correspondence, and I hope you will see your way to completing the decorations.' On May 20 the defendant replied thus shortly. 'Very well.'

"In completing these decorations, the defendant incurred liabilities and expenses which brought the total

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cost of this house up to the sum of twelve thousand four hundred pounds, all of which expenditure has been defrayed by the plaintiff. This action has been brought by the plaintiff to recover from the defendant the sum of three hundred and fifty pounds expended by him in excess of a sum of twelve thousand and fifty pounds, alleged by the plaintiff to have been fixed by this correspondence as the maximum sum that the defendant had authority to expend.

“The question for me to decide is whether or no the defendant is liable to refund to the plaintiff this sum. In my judgment he is so liable.

“What in effect the plaintiff has said is this: ‘I give you a free hand to complete these decorations, provided that you keep within a total cost to me of twelve thousand pounds. If you exceed that sum by as much as fifty pounds, I will not hold you responsible; beyond that point you are no agent of mine, and I shall repudiate liability.’ It is not quite clear to me whether, had the plaintiff in fact repudiated liability under the agent’s contracts, he would, under all the circumstances, have been successful in so doing; but he has not adopted this course. He has accepted liability, and

fallen back upon his rights against the defendant under the terms of the latter's engagements.

"In my judgment the plaintiff is entitled to recover this sum from the defendant.

"It has been sought, on behalf of the defendant, to show that no limit of expenditure was fixed or intended to be fixed by this correspondence. If this were so, I can find no reason for the plaintiff's importation into the correspondence of the figures of twelve thousand pounds and subsequently of fifty pounds. The defendant's contention would render these figures meaningless. It is manifest to me that by his letter of May 20 he assented to a very clear proposition, by the terms of which he must be held to be bound.

"For these reasons there will be judgment for the plaintiff for the amount claimed with costs."

James sighed, and stooping, picked up his umbrella which had fallen with a rattle at the words "importation into this correspondence."

Untangling his legs, he rapidly left the Court; without waiting for his son, he snapped up a hansom cab (it was a clear, grey afternoon) and drove straight to Timothy's where he found Swithin; and to him,

Mrs. Septimus Small, and Aunt Hester, he recounted the whole proceedings, eating two muffins not altogether in the intervals of speech.

"Soames did very well," he ended; "he's got his head screwed on the right way. This won't please Jolyon. It's a bad business for that young Bosinney, he'll go bankrupt, I shouldn't wonder," and then after a long pause, during which he had stared disquietly into the fire, he added:

"He wasn't there—now why?"

There was a sound of footsteps. The figure of a thick-set man, with the ruddy brown face of robust health, was seen in the back drawing-room. The forefinger of his upraised hand was outlined against the black of his frock-coat. He spoke in a grudging voice.

"Well, James," he said; "I can't—I can't stop" And turning round, he walked out.

It was Timothy.

James rose from his chair. "There!" he said; "there! I knew there was something wro——" He checked himself, and was silent, staring before him, as though he had seen a portent.

CHAPTER VI

SOAMES BREAKS THE NEWS

ON leaving the Courts Soames did not go straight home. He felt disinclined for the City, and drawn by need for sympathy in his triumph, he, too, made his way, but slowly and on foot, to Timothy's in the Bayswater Road.

His father had just left, Mrs. Small and Aunt Hester, in possession of the whole story, greeted him warmly. They were sure he was hungry after all that evidence. Smither should toast him some more muffins, his dear father had eaten them all. He must put his legs up on the sofa, and he must have a glass of prune brandy too. It was so strengthening.

Swithin was still present, having lingered later than his wont, for he felt in want of exercise. On hearing this suggestion, he "pushed." A pretty pass young men were coming to! His own liver was out of order, and

he could not bear the thought of anyone else drinking prune brandy.

He went away almost immediately, saying to Soames: "And how's your wife? You tell her from me that if she's dull, and likes to come and dine with me quietly, I'll give her such a bottle of champagne as she doesn't get every day." Staring down from his height on Soames he contracted his thick, puffy, yellow hand as though squeezing within it all this small fry, and throwing out his chest he waddled slowly away.

Mrs. Small and Aunt Hester were left horrified. Swithin was so droll!

They themselves were longing to ask Soames how Irene would take the result, yet knew that they must not; he would perhaps say something of his own accord, to throw some light on this, the present burning question in their lives, the question that from necessity of silence tortured them almost beyond bearing; for even Timothy had now been told, and the effect on his health was little short of alarming. And what, too, would June do? This, also, was a most exciting, if dangerous speculation!

They had never forgotten old Jolyon's visit, since

when he had not once been to see them; they had never forgotten the feeling it gave all who were present, that the family was no longer what it had been—that the family was breaking up.

But Soames gave them no help, sitting with his knees crossed, talking of the Barbizon school of painters, whom he had just discovered. These were the coming men, he said; he should not wonder if a lot of money were made over them; he had his eye on two pictures by a man called Corot, charming things; if he could get them at a reasonable price he was going to buy them—they would, he thought, fetch a big price some day.

Interested as they could not but be, neither Mrs. Septimus Small nor Aunt Hester could entirely acquiesce in being thus put off

It was interesting—most interesting—and then Soames was so clever that they were sure he would do something with those pictures if anybody could; but what was his plan now that he had won his case; was he going to leave London at once, and live in the country, or what was he going to do?

Soames answered that he did not know, he thought

they should be moving soon. He rose and kissed his aunts.

No sooner had Aunt Juley received this emblem of departure than a change came over her, as though she were being visited by dreadful courage, every little roll of flesh on her face seemed trying to escape from an invisible, confining mask.

She rose to the full extent of her more than medium height, and said: "It has been on my mind a long time, dear, and if nobody else will tell you, I have made up my mind that——"

Aunt Hester interrupted her. "Mind, Julia, you do it——" she gasped—"on your own responsibility!"

Mrs. Small went on as though she had not heard "I think you *ought* to know, dear, that Mrs. MacAndei saw Irene walking in Richmond Park with Mr Bosimney."

Aunt Hester, who had also risen, sank back in her chair, and turned her face away. Really Juley was too——she should not do such things when she——Aunt Hester, was in the room, and, breathless with anticipation, she waited for what Soames would answer.

He had flushed the peculiar flush which always

centred between his eyes; lifting his hand, and, as it were, selecting a finger, he bit a nail delicately, then, drawing it out between set lips, he said "Mrs. Mac Ander is a cat!"

Without waiting for any reply, he left the room.

When he went into Timothy's he had made up his mind what course to pursue on getting home. He would go up to Irene and say

"Well, I've won my case, and there's an end of it! I don't want to be hard on Bosinney, I'll see if we can't come to some arrangement, he shan't be pressed And now let's turn over a new leaf! We'll let the house, and get out of these fogs We'll go down to Robin Hill at once I—I never meant to be rough with you! Let's shake hands—and——" Perhaps she would let him kiss her, and forget!

When he came out of Timothy's his intentions were no longer so simple. The smouldering jealousy and suspicion of months blazed up within him He would put an end to that sort of thing once and for all; he would not have her drag his name in the dirt! If she could not or would not love him, as was her duty and his right—she should not play him tricks with anyone

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else! He would tax her with it; threaten to divorce her! That would make her behave; she would never face that. But—but—what if she did? He was staggered; this had not occurred to him.

What if she did? What if she made him a confession? How would he stand then? He would have to bring a divorce!

A divorce! Thus close, the word was paralysing, so utterly at variance with all the principles that had hitherto guided his life. Its lack of compromise appalled him; he felt like the captain of a ship, going to the side of his vessel, and, with his own hands throwing over the most precious of his bales. This jettisoning of his property with his own hand seemed uncanny to Soames. It would injure him in his profession. He would have to get rid of the house at Robin Hill, on which he had spent so much money, so much anticipation—and at a sacrifice. And she! She would no longer belong to him, not even in name! She would pass out of his life, and he—he should never see her again!

He traversed in the cab the length of a street without getting beyond the thought that he should never see her again!

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But perhaps there was nothing to confess, even now very likely there was nothing to confess. Was it wise to push things so far? Was it wise to put himself into a position where he might have to eat his words? The result of this case would ruin Bosinney; a ruined man was desperate, but—what could he do? He might go abroad, ruined men always went abroad. What could *they* do—if indeed it *was* “*they*”—without money? It would be better to wait and see how things turned out. If necessary, he could have her watched. The agony of his jealousy (for all the world like the crisis of an aching tooth) came on again; and he almost cried out. But he must decide, fix on some course of action before he got home. When the cab drew up at the door, he had decided nothing.

He entered, pale, his hands moist with perspiration, dreading to meet her, burning to meet her, ignorant of what he was to say or do.

The maid Bilson was in the hall, and in answer to his question: “Where is your mistress?” told him that Mrs. Forsyte had left the house about noon, taking with her a trunk and bag.

Snatching the sleeve of his fur-coat away from her grasp, he confronted her

“What?” he exclaimed, “what’s that you said?” Suddenly recollecting that he must not betray emotion, he added. “What message did she leave?” and noticed with secret terror the startled look of the maid’s eyes

“Mrs. Forsyte left no message, sir”

“No message, very well, thank you, that will do. I shall be dining out”

The maid went downstairs, leaving him still in his fur-coat, idly turning over the visiting cards in the porcelain bowl that stood on the carved oak rug chest in the hall

Mr and Mrs Bareham Culcher

Lady Bellis

Mrs Septimus Small

Miss Hermione Bellis

Miss Baynes

Miss Winifred Bellis

Mr Solomon Thornworthy

Miss Ella Bellis

Who the devil were all these people? He seemed to have forgotten all familiar things. The words “no message—a trunk, and a bag,” played hide-and-seek in his brain. It was incredible that she had left no message, and, still in his fur-coat, he ran upstairs two steps at a time, as a young married man when he comes home will run up to his wife’s room.

Everything was dainty, fresh, sweet-smelling; everything in perfect order. On the great bed with its lilac silk quilt, was the bag she had made and embroidered with her own hands to hold her sleeping things, her slippers ready at the foot; the sheets even turned over at the head as though expecting her.

On the table stood the silver-mounted brushes and bottles from her dressing-bag, his own present. There must, then, be some mistake. What bag had she taken? He went to the bell to summon Bilson, but remembered in time that he must assume knowledge of where Irene had gone, take it all as a matter of course, and grope out the meaning for himself.

He locked the doors, and tried to think, but felt his brain going round, and suddenly tears forced themselves into his eyes.

Hurriedly pulling off his coat, he looked at himself in the mirror.

He was too pale, a greyish tinge all over his face, he poured out water, and began feverishly washing.

Her silver-mounted brushes smelt faintly of the perfumed lotion she used for her hair, and at this scent the burning sickness of his jealousy seized him again.

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Struggling into his fur, he ran downstairs and out into the street.

He had not lost the command of himself, however, and as he went down Sloane Street he framed a story for use, in case he should not find her at Bosinney's. But if he should? His power of decision again failed; he reached the house without knowing what he should do if he did find her there.

It was after office hours, and the street-door was closed; the woman who opened it could not say whether Mr. Bosinney were in or no; she had not seen him that day, not for two or three days, she did not attend to him now, nobody attended to him, he——

Soames interrupted her, he would go up and see for himself. He went up with a dogged, white face.

The top-floor was unlighted, the door closed, no one answered his ringing, he could hear no sound. He was obliged to descend, shivering under his fur, a chill at his heart. Hailing a cab, he told the man to drive to Park Lane.

On the way he tried to recollect when he had last given her a cheque; she could not have more than three or four pounds, but there were her jewels; and

with exquisite torture he remembered how much money she could raise on these; enough to take them abroad; enough for them to live on ~~for~~ months! He tried to calculate; the cab stopped, and he got out with the calculation unmade.

The butler asked whether Mrs. Soames was in the cab, the master had told him they were both expected to dinner

Soames answered. "No, Mrs. Forsyte has a cold."

The butler was sorry.

Soames thought he was looking at him inquisitively, and remembering that he ~~was~~ not in dress-clothes, asked "Anybody here to dinner, Warmsen?"

"Nobody but Mr. and Mrs. Dartie, sir."

Again it seemed to Soames that the butler was looking curiously at him. His composure gave way.

"What are you looking at?" he said. "What's the matter with me, eh?"

The butler blushed, hung up the fur-coat, murmured something that sounded like: "Nothing, sir, I'm sure, sir," and stealthily withdrew.

Soames walked upstairs. Passing the drawing-room

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without a look, he went straight up to his mother's and father's bedroom

James, standing sideways, the concave lines of his tall, lean figure displayed to advantage in shirt-sleeves and evening waistcoat, his head bent, the end of his white tie peeping askew from underneath one white Dundreary whisker, his eyes peering with intense concentration, his lips pouting, was hooking the top hooks of his wife's bodice. Soames stopped, he felt half-choked, whether because he had come upstairs too fast, or for some other reason. He—he himself had never—never been asked to——

He heard his father's voice, as though there were a pin in his mouth, saying "Who's that? Who's there? What d'you want?" His mother's "Here, Félice, come and hook this, your master'll never get done"

He put his hand up to his throat, and said hoarsely:
"It's I—Soames!"

He noticed gratefully the affectionate surprise in Emily's "Well, my dear boy?" and James's, as he dropped the hook. "What, Soames! What's brought you up? Aren't you well?"

He answered mechanically "I'm all right," and looked at them, and it seemed impossible to bring out his news.

James, quick to take alarm, began "You don't look well I expect you've taken a chill it's liver, I shouldn't wonder Your mother'll give you——"

But Emily broke in quietly: "Have you brought Irene?"

Soames shook his head.

"No," he stammered, "she—she's left me!"

Emily deserted the mirror before which she was standing Her tall, full figure lost its majesty and became very human as she came running over to Soames.

"My dear boy! My *dear* boy!"

She put her lips to his forehead, and stroked his hand

James, too, had turned full towards his son; his face looked older.

"Left you?" he said. "What d'you mean—left you? You never told me she was going to leave you."

Soames answered surlily: "How could I tell? What's to be done?"

James began walking up and down, he looked

strange and stork-like without a coat. "What's to be done!" he muttered. "How should I know what's to be done? What's the good of asking me? Nobody tells me anything, and then they come and ask me what's to be done; and I should like to know how I'm to tell them! Here's your mother, there she stands; *she* doesn't say anything. What *I* should say you've got to do is to follow her."

Soames smiled; his peculiar, supercilious smile had never before looked pitiable.

"I don't know where she's gone," he said.

"Don't ~~know~~ where she's gone!" said James. "How d'you mean, don't know where she's gone? Where d'you suppose she's gone? She's gone after that young Bosinney, that's where she's gone. I ~~knew~~ how it would be."

Soames, in the long silence that followed, felt his mother pressing his hand. And all that passed seemed to pass as though his own power of thinking or doing had gone to sleep.

His father's face, dusky red, twitching as if he were going to cry, and words breaking out that seemed rent from him by some spasm in his soul.

"There'll be a scandal, I always said so." Then, no one saying anything: "And there you stand, you and your mother!"

"And Emily's voice, calm, rather contemptuous: "Come, now, James! Soames will do all that he can"

And James, staring at the floor, a little brokenly: "Well, I can't help you; I'm getting old. Don't you be in too great a hurry, my boy."

And his mother's voice again: "Soames will do all he can to get her back. We won't talk of it. It'll all come right, I daresay."

And James: "Well, I can't see how it can come right. And if she hasn't gone off with that young Bosinney, my advice to you is not to listen to her, but to follow her and get her back."

Once more Soames felt his mother stroking his hand, in token of her approval, and as though repeating some form of sacred oath, he muttered between his teeth: "I will!"

All three went down to the drawing-room together. There were gathered the three girls and Dartie; had Irene been present, the family circle would have been complete

James sank into his armchair, and except for a word of cold greeting to Dartie, whom he both despised and dreaded, as a man likely to be always in want of money, he said nothing till dinner was announcted. Soames, too, was silent, Emily alone, a woman of cool courage, maintained a conversation with Winifred on trivial subjects. She was never more composed in her manner and conversation than that evening.

A decision having been come to not to speak of Irene's flight, no view was expressed by any other member of the family as to the right course to be pursued; there can be little doubt, from the general tone adopted in relation to events as they afterwards turned out, that James's advice "Don't you listen to her, follow her and get her back!" would, with here and there an exception, have been regarded as sound, not only in Park Lane, but amongst the Nicholases, the Rogers, and at Timothy's. Just as it would surely have been endorsed by that wider body of Forsytes all over London, who were merely excluded from judgment by ignorance of the story.

In spite then of Emily's efforts, the dinner was served by Warmson and the footman almost in silence.

Dartie was sulky, and drank all he could get, the girls seldom talked to each other at any time. James asked once where June was, and what she was doing with herself in these days. No one could tell him. He sank back into gloom. Only when Winifred recounted how little Publius had given his bad penny to a beggar, did he brighten up.

"Ah!" he said, "that's a clever little chap. I don't know what'll become of him, if he goes on like this. An intelligent little chap, I call him!" But it was only a flash.

The courses succeeded one another solemnly, under the electric light, which glared upon the table, but barely reached the principal ornament of the walls, a so-called "Sea Piece by Turner," almost entirely composed of cordage and drowning men. Champagne was handed, and then a bottle of James's prehistoric port, but as by the chill hand of some skeleton.

At ten o'clock Soames left, twice in reply to questions, he had said that Irene was not well; he felt he could no longer trust himself. His mother kissed him with her large soft kiss, and he pressed her hand, a flush of warmth in his cheeks. He walked away in the

cold wind, which whistled desolately round the corners of the streets, under a sky of clear steel-blue, alive with stars; he noticed neither their frosty greeting, nor the crackle of the curled-up plane-leaves, nor the night-women hurrying in their shabby furs, nor the pinched faces of vagabonds at street corners. Winter was come! But Soames hastened home, oblivious; his hands trembled as he took the late letters from the gilt wire cage into which they had been thrust through the slit in the door.

None from Irene.

He went into the dining-room; the fire was bright there, his chair drawn up to it, slippers ready, spirit case, and carven cigarette box on the table; but after staring at it all for a minute or two, he turned out the light and went upstairs. There was a fire too in his dressing-room, but her room was dark and cold. It was into this room that Soames went.

He made a great illumination with candles, and for a long time continued pacing up and down between the bed and the door. He could not get used to the thought that she had really left him, and as though still searching for some message, some reason, some reading

of all the mystery of his married life, he began opening every recess and drawer.

There were her dresses; he had always liked, indeed insisted, that she should be well dressed—she had taken very few; two or three at most, and drawer after drawer, full of linen and silk things, was untouched.

Perhaps after all it was only a freak, and she had gone to the seaside for a few days' change. If only that were so, and she were really coming back, he would never again do as he had done that fatal night before last, never again run that risk—though it was her duty, her duty as a wife; though she did belong to him—he would never again run that risk, she was evidently not quite right in her head!

He stooped over the drawer where she kept her jewels; it was not locked, and came open as he pulled; the jewel box had the key in it. This surprised him until he remembered that it was sure to be empty. He opened it.

It was far from empty. Divided, in little green velvet compartments, were all the things he had given her even her watch, and stuck into the recess that con-

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tained the watch was a three-cornered note addressed "Soames Forsyte," in Irene's handwriting

"I think I have taken nothing that you or your people have given me" And that was all.

He looked at the clasps and bracelets of diamonds and pearls, at the little flat gold watch with a great diamond set in sapphires, at the chains and rings, each in its nest, and the tears rushed up in his eyes and dropped upon them

Nothing that she could have done, nothing that she *had* done, brought home to him like this the inner significance of her act. For the moment, perhaps, he understood nearly all there was to understand—understood that she loathed him, that she had loathed him for years, that for all intents and purposes they were like people living in different worlds, that there was no hope for him, never had been; even, that she had suffered—that she was to be pitied.

In that moment of emotion he betrayed the Forsyte in him—forgot himself, his interests, his property—was capable of almost anything; was lifted into the pure ether of the selfless and impractical.

Such moments pass quickly.

And as though with the tears he had purged himself of weakness, he got up, locked the box, and slowly, almost trembling, carried it with him into the other room.

CHAPTER VII

JUNE'S VICTORY

JUNE had waited for her chance, scanning the duller columns of the Journals, morning and evening with an assiduity which at first puzzled old Jolyon, and when her chance came, she took it with all the promptitude and resolute tenacity of her character.

She will always remember best in her life that morning when at last she saw amongst the reliable Cause List of the *Times* newspaper, under the heading of Court XIII, Mr. Justice Bentham, the case of *Forsyte v Bosinney*.

Like a gambler who stakes his last piece of money, she had prepared to hazard her all upon this throw—it was not her nature to contemplate defeat. How, unless with the instinct of a woman in love, she knew that

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Bosinney's discomfiture in this action was assured, cannot be told—on this assumption, however, she laid her plans, as upon a certainty.

Half past eleven found her at watch in the gallery of Court XIII, and there she remained till the case of Forsyte v. Bosinney was over. Bosinney's absence did not disquiet her; she had felt instinctively that he would not defend himself. At the end of the judgment she hastened down, and took a cab to his rooms.

She passed the open street-door and the offices on the three lower floors without attracting notice; not till she reached the top did her difficulties begin.

Her ring was not answered, she had now to make up her mind whether she would go down and ask the caretaker in the basement to let her in to await Mr. Bosinney's return, or remain patiently outside the door, trusting that no one would come up. She decided on the latter course.

A quarter of an hour had passed in freezing vigil on the landing, before it occurred to her that Bosinney had been used to leave the key of his rooms under the door-mat. She looked and found it there. For some minutes she could not decide to make use of it; at last

she let herself in and left the door open that anyone who came might see she was there on business.

This was not the same June who had paid the trembling visit five months ago; those months of suffering and restraint had made her less sensitive, she had dwelt on this visit so long, with such minuteness, that its terrors were discounted beforehand. She was not there to fail this time, for if she failed no one could help her.

Like some mother beast on the watch over her young, her little quick figure never stood still in that room, but wandered from wall to wall, from window to door, fingering now one thing, now another. There was dust everywhere, the room could not have been cleaned for weeks, and June, quick to catch at anything that should buoy up her hope, saw in it a sign that he had been obliged, for economy's sake, to give up his servant.

She looked into the bedroom; the bed was roughly made, as though by the hand of man. Listening intently, she darted in, and peered into his cupboards. A few shirts and collars, a pair of muddy boots—the room was bare even of garments.

She stole back to the sitting-room, and now she

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noticed the absence of all the little things he had set store by. The clock that had been his mother's, the field-glasses that had hung over the sofa; two really valuable old prints of Harrow, where his father had been at school, and last, not least, the piece of Japanese pottery she herself had given him. All were gone, and in spite of the rage roused within her championing soul at the thought that the world should treat him thus, then disappearance augured happily for the success of her plan.

It was while looking at the spot where the piece of Japanese pottery had stood that she felt a strange certainty of being watched; and, turning, saw Irene in the open doorway.

The two stood gazing at each other for a minute in silence; then June walked forward and held out her hand. Irene did not take it.

When her hand was refused, June put it behind her. Her eyes grew steady with anger, she waited for Irene to speak, and thus waiting, took in, with who-knows-what rage of jealousy, suspicion, and curiosity, every detail of her friend's face and dress and figure.

Irene was clothed in her long grey fur, the travel-

ling cap on her head left a wave of gold hair visible above her forehead. The soft fulness of the coat made her face as small as a child's.

Unlike June's cheeks, her cheeks had no colour in them, but were ivory white and pinched as if with cold. Dark circles lay round her eyes. In one hand she held a bunch of violets.

She looked back at June, no smile on her lips, and with those great dark eyes fastened on her, the girl, for all her startled anger, felt something of the old spell.

She spoke first, after all.

"What have you come for?" But the feeling that she herself was being asked the same question, made her add "This horrible case. I came to tell him—he has lost it."

Irene did not speak, her eyes never moved from June's face, and the girl cried

"Don't stand there as if you were made of stone!"

Irene laughed "I wish to God I were!"

But June turned away "Stop!" she cried, "don't tell me! I don't want to hear! I don't want to hear what you've come for. I don't want to hear!" And

like some uneasy spirit, she began swiftly walking to and fro. Suddenly she broke out:

"I was here first. We can't both stay here together!"

On Irene's face a smile wandered up, and died out like a flicker of firelight. She did not move. And then it was that June perceived under the softness and immobility of this figure something desperate and resolved; something not to be turned away, something dangerous. She tore off her hat, and, putting both hands to her brow, pressed back the bronze mass of her hair.

"You have no right here!" she cried defiantly.

Irene answered: "I have no right anywhere——"

"What do you mean?"

"I have left Soames. You always wanted me to!"

June put her hands over her ears.

"Don't! I don't want to hear anything—I don't want to know anything. It's impossible to fight with you! What makes you stand like that? Why don't you go?"

Irene's lips moved; she seemed to be saying: "Where should I go?"

June turned to the window. She could see the face

of a clock down in the street. It was nearly four. At any moment he might come! She looked back across her shoulder, and her face was distorted with anger.

"But Irene had not moved; in her gloved hands she ceaselessly turned and twisted the little bunch of violets.

The tears of rage and disappointment rolled down June's cheeks.

"How *could* you come?" she said. "You have been a false friend to me!"

Again Irene laughed. June saw that she had played a wrong card, and broke down.

"Why have you come?" she sobbed. "You've ruined my life, and now you want to ruin his!"

Irene's mouth quivered; her eyes met June's with a look so mournful that the girl cried out in the midst of her sobbing, "No, no!"

But Irene's head bent till it touched her breast. She turned, and went quickly out, hiding her lips with the little bunch of violets.

June ran to the door. She heard the footsteps going down and down. She called out: "Come back, Irene! Come back!"

The footsteps died away. . . .

Bewildered and torn, the girl stood at the top of the stairs. Why had Irene gone, leaving her mistress of the field? What did it mean? Had she really given him up to her? Or had she——? And she was the prey of a gnawing uncertainty. . . . Bosinney did not come. . . .

About six o'clock that afternoon old Jolyon returned from Wistaria Avenue, where now almost every day he spent some hours, and asked if his granddaughter were upstairs. On being told that she had just come in, he sent up to her room to request her to come down and speak to him

He had made up his mind to tell her that he was reconciled with her father. In future bygones must be bygones. He would no longer live alone, or practically alone, in this great house, he was going to give it up, and take one in the country for his son, where they could all go and live together. If June did not like this, she could have an allowance and live by herself. It wouldn't make much difference to her, for it was a long time since she had shown him any affection.

But when June came down, her face was pinched and piteous, there was a strained, pathetic look in her

eyes. She snuggled up in her old attitude on the arm of his chair, and what he said compared but poorly with the clear, authoritative, injured statement he had thought out with much care. His heart felt sore, as the great heart of a mother-bird feels sore when its youngling flies and bruises its wing. His words halted, as though he were apologising for having at last deviated from the path of virtue, and succumbed, in defiance of sounder principles, to his more natural instincts.

He seemed nervous lest, in thus announcing his intentions, he should be setting his granddaughter a bad example, and now that he came to the point, his way of putting the suggestion that, if she didn't like it, she could live by herself and lump it, 'was delicate in the extreme.

"And if, by any chance, my darling," he said, "you found you didn't get on with them, why, I could make that all right. You could have what you liked. We could find a little flat in London where you could set up, and I could be running to continually. But the children," he added, "are dear little things!"

Then, in the midst of this grave, rather transparent,

explanation of changed policy, his eyes twinkled. "This'll astonish Timothy's weak nerves. That precious young thing will have something to say about this, or I'm a Dutchman!"

June had not yet spoken. Perched thus on the arm of his chair, with her head above him, her face was invisible. But presently he felt her warm cheek against his own, and knew that, at all events, there was nothing very alarming in her attitude towards his news. He began to take courage.

"You'll like your father," he said—"an amiable chap. Never was much push about him, but easy to get on with. You'll find him artistic and all that."

And old Jolyon bethought him of the dozen or so water-colour drawings all carefully locked up in his bedroom; for now that his son was going to become a man of property he did not think them quite such poor things as heretofore.

"As to your—your stepmother," he said, using the word with some little difficulty, "I call her a refined woman—a bit of a Mrs. Gummidge, I shouldn't wonder—but very fond of Jo. And the children," he repeated—

indeed, this sentence ran like music through all his solemn self-justification—"are sweet little things!"

If June had known, those words but reincarnated that tender love for little children, for the young and weak, which in the past had made him desert his son for her tiny self, and now, as the cycle rolled, was taking him from her.

But he began to get alarmed at her silence, and asked impatiently: "Well, what do you say?"

June slid down to his knee, and she in her turn began her tale. She thought it would all go splendidly; she did not see any difficulty, and she did not care a bit what people thought.

Old Jolyon wriggled. H'm! then 'people *would* think! He had thought that after all these years perhaps they wouldn't! Well, he couldn't help it! Nevertheless, he could not approve of his granddaughter's way of putting it—she ought to mind what people thought!

Yet he said nothing. His feelings were too mixed, too inconsistent for expression

No—went on June—she did not care; what business was it of theirs? There was only one thing—and with her cheek pressing against his knee, old Jolyon knew at

once that this something was no trifle. As he was going to buy a house in the country, would he not—to please her—buy that splendid house of Soames's at Robin Hill? It was finished, it was perfectly beautiful, and no one would live in it now. They would all be so happy there!

Old Jolyon was on the alert at once. Wasn't the "man of property" going to live in his new house, then? He never alluded to Soames now but under this title.

"No"—June said—"he was not, she knew that he was not!"

How did she know?

She could not tell him, but she knew. She knew nearly for certain! It was most unlikely, circumstances had changed! Irene's words still rang in her head: "I have left Soames! Where should I go?"

But she kept silence about that.

If her grandfather would only buy it and settle that wretched claim that ought never to have been made on Phil! It would be the very best thing for everybody, and everything—everything might come straight!

And June put her lips to his forehead, and pressed them close.

But old Jolyon freed himself from her caress, his

face wore the judicial look which came upon it when he dealt with affairs. He asked. What did she mean? There was something behind all this—had she been seeing Bosinney?

June answered: "No; but I have been to his rooms."

"Been to his rooms? Who took you there?"

June faced him steadily. "I went alone. He has lost that case. I don't care whether it was right or wrong. I want to help him; and *I will!*"

Old Jolyon asked again: "Have you seen him?" His glance seemed to pierce right through the girl's eyes into her soul.

Again June answered: "No; he was not there. I waited, but he did not come."

Old Jolyon made a movement of relief. She had risen and looked down at him; so slight, and light, and young, but so fixed, and so determined, and disturbed, vexed, as he was, he could not frown away that fixed look. The feeling of being beaten, of the reins having slipped, of being old and tired, mastered him.

"Ah!" he said at last, "you'll get yourself into a mess one of these days, I can see. You want your own way in everything."

Visited by one of his strange bursts of philosophy, he added: "Like that you were born; and like that you'll stay until you die!"

And he, who in his dealings with men of business, with Boards, with Forsytes of all descriptions, with such as were not Forsytes, had always had his own way, looked at his indomitable grandchild sadly—for he felt in her that quality which above all others he unconsciously admired.

"Do you know what they say is going on?" he said slowly.

June crimsoned.

"Yes—no. I know—and I don't know—I don't care!" and she stamped her foot.

"I believe," said old Jolyon, dropping his eyes, "that you'd have him if he were dead!"

There was a long silence before he spoke again.

"But as to buying this house—you don't know what you're talking about!"

June said that she did. She knew that he could get it if he wanted. He would only have to give what it cost.

"What it cost! You know nothing about it. I

won't go to Soames—I'll have nothing more to do with that young man."

"But you needn't; you can go to Uncle James. If you can't buy the house, will you pay this law-suit claim? I know he is terribly hard up—I've seen it. You can stop it out of my money!"

A twinkle came into old Jolyon's eyes.

"Stop it out of your money! A pretty way! And what will you do, pray, without your money?"

But secretly, the idea of wresting the house from James and his son had begun to take hold of him. He had heard on Forsyte 'Change much comment, much rather doubtful praise of this house. It was "too artistic," but a fine place. To take from the "man of property" that on which he had set his heart, would be a crowning triumph over James, practical proof that he was going to make a man of property of Jo, to put him back in his proper position, and there to keep him secure. Justice once for all on those who had chosen to regard his son as a poor, penniless outcast!

He would see, he would see! It might be out of the question; he was not going to pay a fancy-price, but if it could be done, why, perhaps he would do it!

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And still more secretly he knew that he could not refuse her.

But he did not commit himself. He would think it over—he said to June.

CHAPTER VIII.

BOSINNEY'S DEPARTURE.

OLD JOLYON was not given to hasty decisions; it is probable that he would have continued to think over the purchase of the house at Robin Hill, had not June's face told him that he would have no peace until he acted.

At breakfast next morning she asked him what time she should order the carriage.

"Carriage!" he said, with some appearance of innocence; 'what for? *I'm* not going out!"

She answered: "If you don't go early, you won't catch Uncle James before he goes into the City."

"James! what about your Uncle James?"

"The house," she replied, in such a voice that he no longer pretended ignorance.

"I've not made up my mind," he said.

"You must! You must! Oh! Gran—think of me!"

Old Jolyon grumbled out: "Think of you—I'm always thinking of you, but you don't think of yourself; you don't think what you're letting yourself in for. Well, order the carriage at ten!"

At a quarter past he was placing his umbrella in the stand at Park Lane—he did not choose to relinquish his hat and coat; telling Warmson that he wanted to see his master, he went, without being announced, into the study, and sat down.

James was still in the dining-room talking to Soames, who had come round again before breakfast. On hearing who his visitor was, he muttered nervously. "Now, what's *he* want, I wonder?"

He then got up

"Well," he said to Soames, "don't you go doing anything in a hurry. The first thing is to find out where she is—I should go to Stainer's about it; they're the best men, if they can't find her, nobody can." And suddenly moved to strange softness, he muttered to himself: "Poor little thing! *I* can't tell what she was thinking about!" and went out blowing his nose.

Old Jolyon did not rise on seeing his brother, but

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held out his hand, and exchanged with him the clasp of a Forsyte.

James took another chair by the table, and leaned his head on his hand.

"Well," he said, "how are you? We don't see much of *you* nowadays!"

Old Jolyon paid no attention to the remark.

"How's Emily?" he asked; and waiting for no reply, went on: "I've come to see you about this affair of young Bosinney's. I'm told that new house of his is a white elephant."

"I don't know anything about a white elephant," said James, "I know he's lost his case, and I should say he'll go bankrupt."

Old Jolyon was not slow to seize the opportunity this gave him.

"I shouldn't wonder a bit!" he agreed; "and if he goes bankrupt, the 'man of property'—that is, Soames'll be out of pocket. Now, what I was thinking was this: If he's not going to live there——"

Seeing both surprise and suspicion in James's eye, he quickly went on: "I don't want to know anything; I suppose Irene's put her foot down—it's not material to

me. But I'm thinking of a house in the country myself, not too far from London, and if it suited me I don't say that I mightn't look at it, at a price."

James listened to this statement with a strange mixture of doubt, suspicion, and relief, merging into a dread of something behind, and tinged with the remains of his old undoubted reliance upon his elder brother's good faith and judgment. There was anxiety, too, as to what old Jolyon could have heard and how he had heard it; and a sort of hopefulness arising from the thought that if June's connection with Bosinney were completely at an end, her grandfather would hardly seem anxious to help the young fellow. Altogether he was puzzled, as he did not like either to show this, or to commit himself in any way, he said:

"They tell me you're altering your Will in favour of your son."

He had not been told this; he had merely added the fact of having seen old Jolyon with his son and grandchildren to the fact that he had taken his Will away from Forsyte, Bustard and Forsyte. The shot went home.

"Who told you that?" asked old Jolyon.

"I'm sure I don't know," said James; "I can't remember names—I know somebody told me. Soames spent a lot of money on this house; he's not likely to part with it except at a good price."

"Well," said old Jolyon, "if he thinks I'm going to pay a fancy-price, he's mistaken. I've not got the money to throw away that he seems to have. Let him try and sell it at a forced sale, and see what he'll get. It's not every man's house, I hear!"

James, who was secretly also of this opinion, answered: "It's a gentleman's house. Soames is here now if you'd like to see him."

"No," said old Jolyon, "I haven't got as far as that; and I'm not likely to, I can see that very well if I'm met in this manner!"

James was a little cowed; when it came to the actual figures of a commercial transaction he was sure of himself, for then he was dealing with facts, not with men; but preliminary negotiations such as these made him nervous—he never knew quite how far he could go.

"Well," he said, "I know nothing about it. Soames, he tells me nothing; I should think he'd entertain it—it's a question of price."

"Oh!" said old Jolyon, "don't let him make a favour of it! He placed his hat on his head in dudgeon.

The door was opened and Soames came in.

"There's a policeman out here," he said with his half smile, "for Uncle Jolyon."

Old Jolyon looked at him angrily, and James said. "A policeman? I don't know anything about a policeman. But I suppose *you* know something about him," he added to old Jolyon with a look of suspicion: "I suppose you'd better see him!"

In the hall an Inspector of Police stood stolidly regarding with heavy-lidded pale-blue eyes the fine old English furniture picked up by James at the famous Mavrojano sale in Portman Square. "You'll find my brother in there," said James.

The Inspector raised his fingers respectfully to his peaked cap, and entered the study.

James saw him go in with a strange sensation.

"Well," he said to Soames, "I suppose we must wait and see what he wants. Your uncle's been here about the house!"

He returned with Soames into the dining-room, but could not rest.

"Now what *does* he want?" he murmured again.

"Who?" replied Soames: "the Inspector? They sent him round from Stanhope Gate, that's all I know: That 'nonconformist' of Uncle Jolyon's has been pilfering, I shouldn't wonder!"

But in spite of his calmness, he too was ill at ease.

At the end of ten minutes old Jolyon came in.

He walked up to the table, and stood there perfectly silent pulling at his long white moustaches. James gazed up at him with opening mouth; he had never seen his brother look like this.

Old Jolyon raised his hand, and said slowly:

"Young Bosinney has been run over in the fog and killed."

Then standing above his brother and his nephew, and looking down at them with his deep eyes: "There's—some—talk—of—suicide," he said.

James's jaw dropped. "*Suicide!* What should he do that for?"

Old Jolyon answered sternly: "God knows, if you and your son don't!"

But James did not reply.

For all men of great age, even for all Forsytes, life has had bitter experiences. The passer-by, who sees them wrapped in cloaks of custom, wealth, and comfort, would never suspect that such black shadows had fallen on their roads. To every man of great age—to Sir Walter Bentham himself—the idea of suicide has once at least been present in the anteroom of his soul; on the threshold, waiting to enter, held out from the inmost chamber by some chance reality, some vague fear, some painful hope. To Forsytes that final renunciation of property is hard. Oh! it is hard! Seldom—perhaps never—can they achieve it; and yet, how near have they not sometimes been!

So even with James! Then in the medley of his thoughts, he broke out: "Why I saw it in the paper yesterday: 'Run over in the fog!' They didn't know his name!" He turned from one face to the other in his confusion of soul; but instinctively all the time he was rejecting that rumour of suicide. He dared not entertain this thought, so against his interest, against the interest of his son, of every Forsyte. He strove against it, and as his nature ever unconsciously rejected that which it could not with safety accept, so gradually

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he overcame this fear. It was an accident! It must have been!

Old Jolyon broke in on his reverie.

"Death was instantaneous. He lay all yesterday' at the hospital. There was nothing to tell them who he was. I 'am going there now; you and your son had better come too."

No one opposing this command he led the way from the room.

The day was still and clear and bright, and driving over to Park Lane from Stanhope Gate, old Jolyon had had the carriage open. Sitting back on the padded cushions, finishing his cigar, he had noticed with pleasure the keen crispness of the air, the bustle of the cabs and people; the strange, almost Parisian, alacrity that the first fine day will bring into London streets after a spell of fog or rain. And he had felt so happy; he had not felt like it for months. His confession to June was off his mind; he had the prospect of his son's, above all, of his grandchildren's company in the future—(he had appointed to meet young Jolyon at the Hotch Potch that very morning to discuss it again); and there was the pleasurable excitement of a coming encounter, a

coming victory, over James and the "man of property" in the matter of the house.

He had the carriage closed now; he had no heart to look on gaiety; nor was it right that Forsytes should be seen driving with an Inspector of Police.

In that carriage the Inspector spoke again of the death:

"It was not so very thick just there. The driver says the gentleman must have had time to see what he was about, he seemed to walk right into it. It appears that he was very hard up, we found several pawn-tickets at his rooms, his account at the bank is overdrawn, and there's this case in to-day's papers;" his cold blue eyes travelled from one to another of the three Forsytes in the carriage.

Old Jolyon watching from his corner saw his brother's face change, and the brooding, worried look deepen on it. At the Inspector's words, indeed, all James's doubts and fears revived. Hard—up—pawn—tickets—an overdrawn account! These words that had all his life been a far-off nightmare to him, seemed to make uncannily real that suspicion of suicide which must on no account be entertained. He sought his son's eye, but lynx-eyed,

taciturn, immovable, Soames gave no answering look. And to old Jolyon watching, divining the league of mutual defence between them, there came an overmastering desire to have his own son at his side, as though this visit to the dead man's body was a battle in which otherwise he must single-handed meet those two. And the thought of how to keep June's name out of the business kept whurring in his brain. James had his son to support him! Why should he not send for Jo?

Taking out his card-case, he pencilled the following message:

"Come round at once. I've sent the carriage for you."

On getting out he gave this card to his coachman, telling him to drive as fast as possible to the Hotch Potch Club, and if Mr. Jolyon Forsyte were there to give him the card and bring him at once. If not there yet, he was to wait till he came.

He followed the others slowly up the steps, leaning on his umbrella, and stood a moment to get his breath. The Inspector said: "This is the mortuary, sir. But take your time."

In the bare, white-walled room, empty of all but a streak of sunshine smeared along the dustless floor, lay a form covered by a sheet. With a huge steady hand the Inspector took the hem and turned it back. A sightless face gazed up at them, and on either side of that sightless defiant face the three Forsytes gazed down; in each one of them the secret emotions, fears, and pity of his own nature rose and fell like the rising, falling waves of life, whose wash those white walls barred out now for ever from Bosinney. And in each one of them the trend of his nature, the odd essential spring, that moved him in fashions minutely, unalterably different from those of every other human being, forced him to a different attitude of thought. Far from the others, yet inscrutably close, each stood thus, alone with death, silent, his eyes lowered.

The Inspector asked softly:

"You identify the gentleman, sir?"

Old Jolyon raised his head and nodded. He looked at his brother opposite, at that long lean figure brooding over the dead man, with face dusky red, and strained grey eyes; and at the figure of Soames white and still by his father's side. And all that he had felt

against those two was gone like smoke in the long white presence of Death. Whence comes it, how comes it—Death? Sudden reverse of all that goes before; blind setting forth on a path that leads to—where? Dark quenching of the fire! The heavy, brutal crushing-out that all men must go through, keeping their eyes clear and brave unto the end! Small and of no import, insects though they are! And across old Jolyon's face there flitted a gleam, for Soames, murmuring to the Inspector, crept noiselessly away.

Then suddenly James raised his eyes. There was a queer appeal in that suspicious troubled look: "I know I'm no match for you," it seemed to say. And, hunting for a handkerchief he wiped his brow; then, bending sorrowful and lank over the dead man, he too turned and hurried out.

Old Jolyon stood, still as death, his eyes fixed on the body. Who shall tell of what he was thinking? Of himself, when his hair was brown like the hair of that young fellow dead before him? Of himself, with his battle just beginning, the long, long battle he had loved; the battle that was over for this young man almost before it had begun? Of his granddaughter, with

her broken hopes? Of that other woman? Of the strangeness, and the pity of it? And the irony, inscrutable, and bitter of that end? Justice! There was no justice for men, for they were ever in the dark!

Or perhaps in his philosophy he thought. Better to be out of it all! Better to have done with it, like this poor youth. . . .

Someone touched him on the arm.

A tear started up and wetted his eyelash. "Well," he said, "I'm no good here. I'd better be going. You'll come to me as soon as you can, Jo," and with his head bowed he went away.

It was young Jolyon's turn to take his stand beside the dead man, round whose fallen body he seemed to see all the Forsytes breathless, and prostrated. The stroke had fallen too swiftly.

The forces underlying every tragedy—forces that take no denial, working through cross currents to their ironical end, had met and fused with a thunder-clap, flung out the victim, and flattened to the ground all those that stood around.

Or so at all events young Jolyon seemed to see them, lying around Bosinney's body.

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He asked the Inspector to tell him what had happened, and the latter, like a man who does not every day get such a chance, again detailed such facts as were known.

"There's more here, sir, however," he said, "than meets the eye. I don't believe in suicide, nor in pure accident, myself. It's more likely I think that he was suffering under great stress of mind, and took no notice of things about him. Perhaps you can throw some light on these."

He took from his pocket a little packet and laid it on the table. Carefully undoing it, he revealed a lady's handkerchief, pinned through the folds with a pin, of discoloured Venetian gold, the stone of which had fallen from the socket. A scent of dried violets rose to young Jolyon's nostrils.

"Found in his breast pocket," said the Inspector; "the name has been cut away!"

Young Jolyon with difficulty answered. "I'm afraid I cannot help you!" But vividly there rose before him the face he had seen light up, so tremulous and glad, at Bosinney's coming! Of her he thought more than of his own daughter, more than of them all—of her

BOSINNEY'S DEPARTURE.

with the dark, soft glance, the delicate passive face, waiting for the dead man, waiting even at that moment, perhaps, still and patient in the sunlight

• He walked sorrowfully away from the hospital towards his father's house, reflecting that this death would break up the Forsyte family. The stroke had indeed slipped past their defences into the very wood of their tree. They might flourish to all appearance as before, preserving a brave show before the eyes of London, but the trunk was dead, withered by the same flash that had stricken down Bosinney. And now the saplings would take its place, each one a new custodian of the sense of property.

Good forest of Forsytes! thought young Jolyon—
soundest timber of our land!

Concerning the cause of this death—his family would doubtless reject with vigour the suspicion of suicide, which was so compromising! They would take it as an accident, a stroke of fate. In their hearts they would even feel it an intervention of Providence, a retribution—had not Bosinney endangered their two most priceless possessions, the pocket and the hearth? And they would talk of “that unfortunate accident of young

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Bosinney's," but perhaps they would not talk—silence might be better!

As for himself, he regarded the bus-driver's account of the accident as of very little value. For no one so madly in love committed suicide for want of money; nor was Bosinney the sort of fellow to set much store by a financial crisis. And so he too rejected this theory of suicide, the dead man's face rose too clearly before him. Gone in the heyday of his summer—and to believe thus that an accident had cut Bosinney off in the full sweep of his passion was more than ever pitiful to young Jolyon.

Then came a vision of Soames' home as it now was, and must be hereafter. The streak of lightning had flashed its clear uncanny gleam on bare bones with grinning spaces between, the disguising flesh was gone. . . .

In the dining-room at Stanhope Gate old Jolyon was sitting alone when his son came in. He looked very wan in his great armchair. And his eyes travelling round the walls with their pictures of still life, and the masterpiece "Dutch fishing-boats at Sunset" seemed as

though passing their gaze over his life with its hopes, its gains, its achievements.

"Ah! Jo!" he said, "is that you? I've told poor little June But that's not all of it. Are you going to Soames'? *She's* brought it on herself, I suppose; but somehow I can't bear to think of her, shut up there — and all alone." And holding up his thin, veined hand, he clenched it.

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CHAPTER IX.

IRENE'S RETURN.

AFTER leaving James and old Jolyon in the mortuary of the hospital, Soames hurried aimlessly along the streets.

The tragic event of Bosinney's death altered the complexion of everything. There was no longer the same feeling that to lose a minute would be fatal, nor would he now risk communicating the fact of his wife's flight to anyone till the inquest was over.

That morning he had risen early, before the postman came, had taken the first-post letters from the box himself, and, though there had been none from Irene, he had made an opportunity of telling Bilson that her mistress was at the sea; he would probably, he said, be going down himself from Saturday to Monday. This had given him time to breathe, time to leave no stone unturned to find her.

But now, cut off from taking steps by Bosinney's death—that strange death, to think of which was like putting a hot iron to his heart, like lifting a great weight from it—he did not know how to pass his day; and he wandered here and there through the streets, looking at every face he met, devoured by a hundred anxieties.

And as he wandered, he thought of him who had finished his wandering, his prowling, and would never haunt his house again.

Already in the afternoon he passed posters announcing the identity of the dead man, and bought the papers to see what they said. He would stop their mouths if he could, and he went into the City, and was closeted with Boulter for a long time.

On his way home, passing the steps of Jobson's about half past four, he met George Forsyte, who held out an evening paper to Soames, saying:

"Here! Have you seen this about the poor Buccaneer?"

Soames answered stonily: "Yes."

George stared at him. He had never liked Soames; he now held him responsible for Bosinney's death. Soames had done for him—done for him by that act

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of property that had sent the Buccaneer to run amok that fatal afternoon.

"The poor fellow," he was thinking, "was so cracked with jealousy, so cracked for his vengeance, that he heard nothing of the omnibus in that infernal fog."

Soames had done for him! And this judgment was in George's eyes.

"They talk of suicide here," he said at last. "*That* cat won't jump"

Soames shook his head. "An accident," he muttered.

Clenching his fist on the paper, George crammed it into his pocket. He could not resist a parting shot.

"H'mm! All flourishing at home? Any little Soameses yet?"

With a face as white as the steps of Jobson's, and a lip raised as if snarling, Soames brushed past him and was gone.

On reaching home, and entering the little lighted hall with his latchkey, the first thing that caught his eye was his wife's gold-mounted umbrella lying on the rug chest. Flinging off his fur coat, he hurried to the drawing-room.

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The curtains were drawn for the night, a bright fire of cedar-logs burned in the grate, and by its light he saw Irene sitting in her usual corner on the sofa. He shut the door softly, and went towards her. She did not move, and did not seem to see him.

"So you've come back?" he said. "Why are you sitting here in the dark?"

Then he caught sight of her face, so white and motionless that it seemed as though the blood must have stopped flowing in her veins, and her eyes, that looked enormous, like the great, wide, startled brown eyes of an owl.

Huddled in her grey fur against the sofa cushions, she had a strange resemblance to a captive owl, bunched in its soft feathers against the wires of a cage. The supple erectness of her figure was gone, as though she had been broken by cruel exercise, as though there were no longer any reason for being beautiful, and supple, and erect.

"So you've come back," he repeated.

She never looked up, and never spoke, the firelight playing over her motionless figure.

Suddenly she tried to rise, but he prevented her; it was then that he understood.

She had come back like an animal wounded to death, not knowing where to turn, not knowing what she was doing. The sight of her figure, huddled in the fur, was enough.

He knew then for certain that Bosinney had been her lover; knew that she had seen the report of his death—perhaps, like himself, had bought a paper at the draughty corner of a street, and read it.

She had come back then of her own accord, to the cage she had pined to be free of—and taking in all the tremendous significance of this, he longed to cry: “Take your hated body, that I love, out of my house! Take away that pitiful white face, so cruel and soft—before I crush it. Get out of my sight; never let me see you again!”

And, at those unspoken words, he seemed to see her rise and move away, like a woman in a terrible dream, from which she was fighting to awake—rise and go out into the dark and cold, without a thought of him, without so much as the knowledge of his presence.

Then he cried, contradicting what he had not yet

spoken, "No; stay there!" And turning away from her, he sat down in his accustomed chair on the other side of the hearth.

They sat in silence.

And Soames thought: "Why is all this? Why should I suffer so? What have I done? It is not my fault!"

Again he looked at her, huddled like a bird that is shot and dying, whose poor breast you see panting as the air is taken from it. whose poor eyes look at you who have shot it, with a slow, soft, unseeing look taking farewell of all that is good—of the sun, and the air, and its mate.

So they sat, by the firelight, in the silence, one on each side of the hearth.

And the fume of the burning cedar logs, that he loved so well, seemed to grip Soames by the throat till he could bear it no longer. And going out into the hall he flung the door wide, to gulp down the cold air that came in; then without hat or overcoat went out into the Square.

Along the garden rails a half-starved cat came rubbing her way towards him, and Soames thought: "Suffering! when will it cease, my suffering?"

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At a front door across the way was a man of his acquaintance named Rutter, scraping his boots, with an air of "I am master here." And Soames walked on.

From far in the clear air the bells of the church where he and Irene had been married were pealing in "practice" for the advent of Christ, the chimes ringing out above the sound of traffic. He felt a craving for strong drink, to lull him to indifference, or rouse him to fury. If only he could burst out of himself, out of this web that for the first time in his life he felt around him. If only he could surrender to the thought. "Divorce her—turn her out! She has forgotten you. Forget her!"

If only he could surrender to the thought: "Let her go—she has suffered enough!"

If only he could surrender to the desire: "Make a slave of her—she is in your power!"

If only even he could surrender to the sudden vision. "What does it all matter?" Forget himself for a minute, forget that it mattered what he did, forget that, whatever he did he must sacrifice something.

If only he could act on an impulse!

He could forget nothing; surrender to no thought,

vision, or desire; it was all too serious; too close around him, an unbreakable cage.

On the far side of the Square newspaper boys were calling their evening wares, and the gaulish cries mingled and jangled with the sound of those church bells

Soames covered his ears. The thought flashed across him that but for a chance, he himself, and not Bosinney, might be lying dead, and she, instead of crouching there like a shot bird with those dving eyes——

Something soft touched his legs, the cat was rubbing herself against them. And a sob that shook him from head to foot burst from Soames' chest. Then all was still again in the dark, where the houses seemed to stare at him, each with a master and mistress of its own, and a secret story of happiness or sorrow.

And suddenly he saw that his own door was open, and black against the light from the hall a man standing with his back turned. Something slid too in his breast, and he stole up close behind.

He could see his own fur coat flung across the carved oak chair; the Persian rugs, the silver bowls, the

rows of porcelain plates arranged along the walls, and this unknown man who was standing there.

And sharply he asked: "What is it you want, sir?"

The visitor turned. It was young Jolyon.

"The door was open," he said. "Might I see your wife for a minute, I have a message for her?"

Soames gave him a strange, sidelong stare.

"My wife can see no one," he muttered doggedly.

Young Jolyon answered gently: "I shouldn't keep her a minute."

Soames brushed by him and barred the way.

"She can see no one," he said again.

Young Jolyon's glance shot past him into the hall, and Soames turned. There in the drawing-room doorway stood Irene, her eyes were wild and eager, her lips were parted, her hands outstretched. In the sight of both men that light vanished from her face; her hands dropped to her sides; she stood like stone.

Soames spun round, and met his visitor's eyes, and at the look he saw in them, a sound like a snarl escaped him. He drew his lips back in the ghost of a smile.

HERNÉ'S RETURN.

"This is my house," he said; "I manage my own affairs. I've told you once—I tell you again; we are at home."

And in young Jolyon's face he slammed the door.

THE END.

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